

BACKPACKERS 2015

A Christian Adventure for Young People



Investigation Station Teaching Material

Name:

Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible New Century Version (Anglicanised Edition)
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BACKPACKERS 2015: INTRODUCTION TO OUR THEME

Welcome to the teaching material for Backpackers 2015. Our theme for this year is: **Investigation Station** – looking at the clues (signs) we are given in John's Gospel that help us work out who Jesus really is. If he is who he claims to be, we can also be confident that he has the power to give us real life – life to the full.

Each day – both all together and in groups - we will explore a particular story from John's, focusing in on its meaning through a main theme or "big idea".

The "all together" time will introduce the big theme for the day and begin to unpack it. The group times are opportunities to get to know your children, to develop the main theme further and apply it in fun and creative ways.

The following table gives the key Bible passage we will be exploring each day, the title for that day, and the big idea that we want each child to grasp:

ay	Bible Passage	Title	Big Idea
Day 1	John 2: -1-11: Water into wine	<i>Someone to be watched!</i>	Jesus' first miracle shows that he is someone very special who can't be ignored
Day 2	John 6:1-14,35: Feeding 5000	<i>Follow that man!</i>	Jesus acts powerfully like God to give us what we need. He is someone to follow.
Day 3	John 9:1-12 (13-34): A blind man healed	<i>Witness statements!</i>	Even his enemies can't deny it, Jesus is "the light of the world." Do we see?
Day 4	John 20:1-8, 9-31: Dead man alive	<i>Your verdict!</i>	As promises Jesus comes back from the dead. What do we make of the evidence and his power to give real life

Our memory verse for the week from the Gospel of John and reveals that these stories about Jesus are not simply "interesting stories" but are important clues about the identity of Jesus and the proof that he can deliver on his promise to give us real, satisfying life – life to the full!

These are written down that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:31

The teaching materials were put together with the help of David Heath-Whyte, Daryl Kingston, Andrew Patterson, Heather Pugsley and others. If you have any questions about the materials please get in touch with Andrew Patterson (andrew.patterson@tiscali.co.uk, Tel: 01494 785809)

The teaching structure of each day:

Broadly this fits previous years and includes the following elements:

<i>Name of element</i>	<i>Length of time</i>	<i>Ingredients</i>
Open Door/Way In	15 minutes	Welcome and registration of group members. Short activities involving minimal supervision for children as they arrive.
All Together Time (1)	35 minutes	All together time. Our up-front team will introduce the theme for the day. Includes songs, notices and prayer.
Group Teaching Time (1)	50 minutes	Time in groups to look together at the passage for the day and develop an understanding of it. Also to include toilet break and snack.
All Together Time (2)*	25 minutes	Slot together after lunch where we bed down some of the ideas that were introduced in the first time together.
Group Teaching Time (2)	35 (25)+ minutes	The slot where we can think a little more about the day's theme and it's application in our groups.
All Together Time (3)	35 (45) minutes	Third slot all together. A session with songs and quiz/games that reinforce the day's big theme. May also include some "show and tell."
Group Prayer Time	10 minutes	Rounding up and praying in our groups before children are collected.

* Deep Blues will have their own programme during this slot.

+ Times in brackets are timings for Friday only.

Group Leader's Preparation:

The main Bible passage for each day is provided for you in a modern, child-friendly version. (At the end of this booklet you can find an even simpler version of each passage that might be more appropriate for the youngest children).^{*} One of your most important jobs as a leader is to spend time looking carefully at the passage and getting to grips with it before each day. The **"Big Idea"** will be a helpful guide to ensure that you and your group don't stray too far from the main point! For each passage you will find some background notes to help you understand the story and its significance.

We will be exploring the same Bible passages in our groups that the "up-front" team will use in the "all-together" sessions, so there is potential for repetition and overlap, which will help the "Big Idea" to stick!

One suggestion is to spend a part of your first group teaching time looking at the day's passage together. To help you do this there are skeleton **'Bible Time'** materials provided for each day (also found at the end of this booklet (pp.34-46). These will need to be adapted and adjusted for your own particular group so that they help your children engage with the Bible and unlock the main theme(s) of each passage. This slot would also be a useful time to address questions that have arisen from the up-front time, and the more familiar we are with the stories, the more able we should be to respond helpfully to them.

In terms of the day as a whole, in previous years some have found it helpful to use the first group time to focus on the key teaching points from the main Bible passage and first up-front session, and to use the afternoon to focus more on "response" and "application – as well to "bed in" the memory verse.

Alongside the group Bible times – you will need to plan some group activities and games that will, in some way, reinforce or develop the key teaching points from the morning teaching session. You will need to look at the resources suggested for each day and determine which might be useful and appropriate for your group. The ideas have been coded according to group colour, but this is only a rough guide. There are more resources than you can use, so please be selective!

You may also want to have some sort of activity for your children to work on as they start to arrive at the start of the day. This will give you time to personally welcome new arrivals, integrate them with other group members, take registers, etc. Suggestions and ideas for this slot are included in this resource (including icebreaker games).

Do ensure that you allocate enough time to pray in your groups; as leaders we want to model the importance of prayer, not least as an expression of our complete dependence on God. So it would be good to pray briefly as you come to look at the Bible together. The final slot in the day is specifically for prayer, and a great opportunity to "pray in" some of the things we've been learning during the day. There are a few suggestions that might help you pray creatively. Don't spend so much time decorating, colouring etc. in that final session that you don't leave time for praying! The last session may also be a good time to ensure (in creative ways!) that your group has learnt the memory verse.

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- For older groups, make sure that you have some Backpacker Bibles available for use in your groups. It is important that the children see that the stories they are exploring are from the Bible, even if you are using one of the simpler versions of the day's story.

And finally... One of the most important ways of preparing for Backpackers as a leader is to pray ourselves. Do commit the whole week to God, praying especially for the up-front teaching team, and for all those with responsibilities for the smooth running of the week. Pray also for the children in your group and specifically for your leadership. It is vital that the children learn both from what is taught and from the example of those who teach and lead them!

Resources for Days 1-4:

For each day you will find the following:

- ⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** This statement summarises what we want the children to grasp each day. It is provided to give us all a common teaching point to aim for. How deeply you explore this aim will 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. Unless you are teaching the youngest children, to avoid confusion please use this version in your teaching preparation. A simpler version of the passage can be found at the end of this teaching resource if required. [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 can get an electronic copy of these notes, and also the Bible passage, from the Backpackers' web site: <http://www.backpackers-online.org.uk/>.
- ⊕ **Bible notes and background:** 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. You will also find some useful background detail as you explore the Bible passage with your group.
- ⊕ **Group Time Ideas:** These are suggestions and ideas that you might use in your group times. Some ideas have a corresponding resource sheet that you can find at the end of this section. They are broadly categorized according to the age group they are likely to suit. Don't be constrained by these suggestions, but also bear in mind that with toilet breaks and snacks you will probably need 2-3 ideas. *Do not try to do everything!*
- ⊕ **Group Time Resources:** These are the activity resource sheets that correspond to some of the ideas found under “Group Time Ideas.”

Day 1: Water into wine...someone to be watched!

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus’ first miracle shows us that he is someone very special. He also gives us a flavour through the miracle of what kind of life he wants to give us.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** John 2: 1-11



¹ Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there. ²Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. ³When all the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”

⁴Jesus answered, “Dear woman, why come to me? My time has not yet come.”

⁵His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you to do.”

⁶In that place there were six stone water jars. The Jews used jars like these in their washing ceremony. Each jar held about 100 litres.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled the jars to the top.

⁸Then he said to them, “Now take some out and give it to the master of the feast.”

So the servants took the water to the master. ⁹When he tasted it, the water had become wine. He did not know where the wine came from. But the servants who brought the water knew. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, “People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have been drinking a lot, they serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine till now.”

¹¹So in Cana of Galilee, Jesus did his first miracle. There he showed his glory, and his followers believed in him.

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

At the end of his gospel, John explains why he has taken time to select and record his material. There is, as he notes, lots that he might have included about Jesus, but his purpose is very specific. Our memory verse gives us John’s purpose: he wants us to know that Jesus is the Christ, and that real life can be found in knowing and believing in Him.

John calls some of the big clues that he presents in his gospel “signs”. They are actions by Jesus that point to his identity and demonstrate his ability to deliver on his promise to give us authentic, satisfying and everlasting life. There are at least 7 “signs” or clues that John includes and we will be looking at four of them over the week as we piece together the evidence for ourselves.

a. The Mystery:

In a way, John gives the game away at the very start of the gospel, where he shows Jesus as the divine creator come to earth. "In the beginning was the Word..." Jesus then puts forward a case to prove his point. If we put all the clues together they should reach the conclusion that he has reached in John 20:31 "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.". The mystery is "Who is Jesus?" "Why is he so special?" "What difference does he make to my life?" The miracles that we read this week help us to build up a picture of what Jesus is all about.

b. The Clues:

- Jesus is a real human being with family and friends who enjoys weddings, parties and great social gatherings. The fact that we see Jesus is fully divine should not make us forget the fact that he is fully human.
- Jesus is a fantastic human being. Jesus' mother tells Jesus about the problem of the wine running out and clearly expects that he will do something to help. She is not, I imagine, expecting a miracle – but she does show that he is a reliable and resourceful person who can be trusted in a crisis
- Jesus can do things that no ordinary person can do – and he can make a real difference to our lives. Jesus turning water into wine turned that wedding from a disaster to a triumph. Life with Jesus is not dull and boring, but far better than we can imagine – 6 huge jars of great wine was far more than they needed.

c. The conclusion:

Verse 11 says that this miracle "revealed his glory" i.e. it pointed to who Jesus really was. We are also told that the disciples "believed in him" as a result of what he did. We can see later that they had not full understood who Jesus was, but they had made a start on the case.

⊕ Group Time Ideas John 2:1-12

- **'Big Idea':** *Jesus is someone special – definitely worth watching.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.01	Detective Scrapbook Cover to decorate/colour as cover for their folders in which they will keep resources and "evidence" collected and created through the week. (You may want to copy the sheet on to coloured paper that reflects the colour of your group. Avoid the darker versions of a colour or it will make colouring and decoration harder). Cut-out pictures of things that relate to spies or detectives could be used for decoration.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.02	Detective ID cards: See resource sheet. Cut out cards and get the children to draw a picture of themselves in the box. Stick the child's name sticker beneath the picture. Punch a hole in the top and thread with ribbon or string and tie around the child's neck.	Y	Y,R,G
1.03	Clues about me: Each day bring in a bag containing an item that will tell the children something about you – perhaps a photo of your family, or something to do with your favourite hobby. Each day show the children what you have brought in – what do they think it tells them about you – the more the better.	N	Y,R
1.04	Clues about me (2): For slightly older children, choose someone (a child or helper) and ask them to bring in some clues, but don't tell the children who it is. The older the children, the more obscure the clues can be. Over the week can the children guess which leader the clues point to? To keep the suspense going, the children can write their guess on a piece of paper and hand it in when they think they know – the write time and the day the guess was made on the paper. At the end of the week give a small prize to the earliest correct guess.	N	Y,R,G
1.05	Site Tour. Site Tour. Take your group on a short tour of the site (pointing out the important places – toilets, first aid, fire point etc). For older children, follow a trail of clues (perhaps collect a letter at each place that will spell out a word).	N	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.07	'Bible Time' . See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.08	Story Wheel . Create a story wheel using the template. Use the wheel to retell the story and establish "the facts of the case." You will need 9" paper plates and brass fasteners.	Y	Y,R,G,B
	Tumbler Trick : Put 3 tumblers in a line on a table. The middle one faces down, the 2 outside face up. You tell the group that the aim of the trick is to make all 3 tumblers face down after 3 moves. You are allowed to turn 2 tumblers with each move. Demonstrate as shown on Resource sheet. Then ask for volunteers to try BUT make sure the middle tumbler is facing up. This makes the trick impossible. If you don't know the trick, it's impossible to succeed. Say that today's bible story is about an impossible situation, but that Jesus used a miracle and not a trick to solve the problem.		
	Story Sheet : Cut up the story sheet so that each child has a few lines. Give these randomly to the children and allow them a few minutes to practice their lines. Then ask the children to get themselves in the right order to read the story –for the younger children you might want to label the lines in the correct alphabetical order, the older children can use Bibles to sort themselves into the right order. Once the order is correct the children can read the story.		
1.11	Colouring Sheet . A sheet to colour that reminds the children of the 'Big Idea' for the day and has a verse from the day's passage.	Y	Y,R
1.12	Word Search . Word search puzzle with 15 words to find that relate to the Bible story from John 2.	Y	Y,R
1.13	Picture prompts . Use appropriate pictures from Bibles or from the internet etc that help to open up the story. Asking them to observe what is happening, how individuals in the pictures are thinking and feeling etc might be a helpful way of exploring the story and its message.	Y	R,G,B
1.14	Mystery Box : Get a cardboard box and put something inside it (e.g. something sticky, soft, fuzzy etc...). Have a hole cut into the box just big enough for the children to put their hand inside without seeing the contents. Let them guess what the item (s) might be. You can give additional clues to help them.	Y	Y,R,G

1.16	Who am I?" Have a bag of hats/articles of clothing/items that are associated with an occupation or role (e.g. spoon/cook, thermometer/nurse, whistle/referee, hammer/builder etc). Have children takes turns to select/wear an item and get the other children to shout out the occupation. Discussion: what sorts of clues does Jesus give us to help us figure out who he is?	Y	Y,R,G
1.17	Super sleuths: For older children you could read a passage from Sherlock Holmes in which he analyses a situation or a body etc. Think about the care he took to observe and think about the evidence. What is the "evidence" in the stories about Jesus that we need to see?	N	Y,R
1.18	Spot the difference: Sleuths need to be observant and have an eye for detail. Can you spot the differences in the two pictures?	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.19	Maze: Can you work out the way through the maze?	Y	R,G,B
1.20	Guess who: Can the children use their detective skills and work out who did what by following the clues? Can we work out who Jesus really is from looking at the clues from the eye witnesses who saw and heard Jesus?	Y	Y,R,G
1.21	Footprint challenge: Get each child to take of a right shoe. Secretly choose one shoe and make a footprint in a tray of sand or flour etc. Can the children work out which shoe made the print. Again, can we see who Jesus is as we follow the clues?	N	Y,R
1.22	Mini Mike: A version of "Where's Wally?" with pictures from New Testament stories. A great book for early arrivers and finishers (I bought a copy for 1p off Amazon!) As well as a Cana Wedding picture there is also a picture of the feeding of the 5000 which is provided as a resource.	Y	R,G,B
1.23	Identikit: Get a selection of newspapers and magazines (make sure they include a lot of pictures of faces. Get the children to cut out features from the faces to make an identikit picture of someone else in the group. For younger groups cut out some features in advance and get them to choose. They can stick down their completed faces. Can they guess who is represented from the features? Even if the pictures don't resemble anyone it can be a funny exercise to do! Jesus' true identity is far easier to work out!	N	G,B
1.24	Work it Out Quiz: Simple quiz based around the key facts of the story. A chance to revisit the facts and think about the story's meaning and impact on those there – and on us.	Y	Y,R,G
1.25	Good Question! Lateral thinking challenge. Scenarios to work out by asking the right questions. As we come to look at Jesus it's great to ask questions. Maybe there are questions you want to ask about Jesus and the Bible this week. Why not keep a available for children to stick in their questions and find a time during the day or week to look at them together.	Y	Y,R,G

1.26	Crime Puzzles: More scenarios to figure out by spotting the clues. You can give the children one of these each day to work out and see how their detective training is getting on!	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.27	CSI challenge. On a clean piece of white paper make a series of stains e.g. tea, ketchup, orange squash etc. Make sure you include water and red wine. Can the children work out what each stain is. Note: there is a big difference between water and wine!	N	
1.28	Witness statements matchup: Can the children match up the witnesses with what each one saw and heard?	Y	
1.29	Memory verse footprints: Write the memory verse on a series of footprints or magnifying glasses etc. Pin them up in order around your area. As the week goes on take down some of the words to encourage the children to learn the memory verse for themselves.		
	Roving Reporters. In small groups, retell the story as if they were reporting it for their local radio or TV station. OR write a front page article for a newspaper.		
1.31	Daily briefing: Just like in the cop shows, having down their training, now is the time for the children to put together the clues about who Jesus is. Introduce the story and perhaps read it out as if it were a police report. Jesus is clearly someone we need to keep under surveillance. On a flip chart or large piece of paper create an evidence wall. Write "Jesus" as a heading and underneath add the evidence as to who he is as it comes up. Have another title for "Witnesses" and underneath write who saw or heard what, that might help us work out who Jesus is.	N	
1.32	Re enactment: Detectives often get people to re enact a scene to see if any one can remember more details of the event. Get the children to re enact the story. For example you could set up the table as a wedding feast with the children as guests. More confident children could take the main parts. You can prompt the children by asking questions e.g. "Who was at the feast?" "Why was it taking place?" "What went wrong?" "How did Jesus help" etc. Afterwards ask the children if there were any parts of the story that really struck them or understood for the first time. Hopefully by re enacting the scene the children will remember more details of this event and their significance. Props might help!	N	
1.33	Evidence poster: Divide a large piece of paper into 4 – perhaps in the shape of a jigsaw puzzle. In the first quarter get the children to stick pictures related to the story (wine bottles, wedding items, water jars, people in the story). As they do talk about what this evidence tells us about who Jesus is. At the bottom of the collage/poster write their observations e.g. "He was special," "he could do amazing things" etc.	N	

1.35	Under the Magnifying Glass 1: For older groups, a chance to look at the passage in more detail for themselves.	Y	
1.36	Official Witness Statement: A chance for older groups to think about what a character in today's story would heard, seen and concluded – and to construct an “official witness statement.”	Y	

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
	“Cranium”: The Facts of the Case: Divide group into 2 teams. Children have to act out, draw or model with plasticine various simple words from the story. When their team guesses the word they receive a story piece and another word to act/draw/model. The first team to get all the clues, story pieces and put them in the correct order wins.		
1.27	Kim’s Game. Select 12 or more items (including those that relate to the theme of “wedding”). Place them on a tray. Give the children 1 minute to memorize them. Older children can write down as many items as possible. With younger ones you could remove 1 or 2 items and see if they can identify the missing one(s).	N	Y,R
1.28	"Dress the Bride" Game: Younger children will enjoy dressing up as characters at a wedding. Older children can dress the bride using toilet roll – divide your group into 2 and have a competition. Or have a dressing up relay race.	N	Y,R,G,B
1.29	Water, water, wine (aka Duck, duck, goose). Children sit in a circle. One child who is "It" goes around the circle, lightly tapping the other children on the head while saying "Water" or "Wine" for each child. When "It" says "Wine," the child tapped must jump up and chase "It" around the circle as they both try to sit in the empty space. The child who loses the race becomes the next "It."	N	Y,R,G,B
1.30	Action Game. Call out the following words in random order and invite the children to perform the appropriate action: 'Church' (go to one side of the room); 'Reception' (go to the other); 'Bride's coming' (walk slowly); 'Wedding ring' (all join in a circle); 'Sing hymns' (stand still and sing); 'Let's party' (jump up and down!). The last child to do the action can stand with you and choose the next action. If you have little space, stand up for 'church' and sit down for 'reception'.	N	Y,R,G

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.32	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP : Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please, (Alternative ACTS : Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Sorry'. You may want the prayer time to focus on saying sorry for the ways we fail to listen or to follow Jesus. The prayer template for each day (see Prayer Banner) could be used to write children's prayers on.	N	Y,R,G,B
	Wine Bottle Prayers: On a large piece of paper (A2) draw a large wine bottle shape. Cut out strips of red paper the same width as the bottle. Ask the children what they would like to talk to Jesus about – remembering that he can do far more than we imagine to help us. By the time you have stuck on all the prayers, the wine bottle should look full. Point: knowing how Jesus responded in a crisis should encourage us to turn to him with our worries.		
	Trust: Today you could encourage the children to trust Jesus to provide what they, remembering that he loves to do more than we expect. Prompt them to think of situations like the wedding story where they are facing a problem or a challenge and need Jesus to be faithful.		
1.33	Prayer Banner. You could create a prayer banner (from an old sheet or large piece of card). You might divide it into four sections, one for each day. On each day create a template (or use one provided) that could be given to each child on which they could write a short prayer. E.g. for day one the template might be a footprint. Encourage the children to pray their prayer out before fixing it to the banner.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.34	Confetti Praise. Give each child several paper squares. Ask them to write or draw something on them that they want to praise Jesus for. Invite the children to stand in a circle, cupping the squares in their hands. Shout together, 'Jesus, we praise you for...' then each child throws one piece of paper in the air, calling out what they've written or drawn (everyone calling and throwing at the same time). Continue until all the pieces of paper have been thrown.	N	Y,R,G,B

First Day Getting-to-know-you ideas:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
	Investigate each other: Use the resource sheet to ask questions and discover things about others in the group. A simple getting-to-know-you game for the start of the week. For older children the "2 lies one truth" game is another creative way to find out about the others in the group.		
1.35	One step forward. All stand in a line. Leader calls out questions like: 'Who had cornflakes for breakfast?' Those who did, take a step forward until they reach the finish line. You might also include questions about whether they've been to Backpackers before or whether they belong to a church etc	N	Y,R,G,B
1.36	Into line. Get the group to form a single line <i>without talking</i> where the line is in alphabetical order of first name or in birthday order etc. (requires some creative non-verbal communication!). For older groups you could impose a time limit.	N	R,G,B
1.38	Yes and No. Ask for a volunteer to be interviewed. They must answer the questions without saying 'yes' or 'no', hesitating or repeating themselves (for example saying 'maybe' over and over again). See if they can last for a minute. The interview could go something like this: 'What's your name? Are you sure about that? What's your favourite sport – I bet it's belly dancing? What's your favourite food – I bet it's liver? Sprouts? Chips? Are you married? Would you like to be married? Do you go to school? Are you the head? A teacher? The caretaker? and so on.	N	Y,R,G
1.39	Fish and chips. The game is similar to 'Yes and no'. Ask for a volunteer to be interviewed. This time they are only allowed to say 'Fish and chips'. The interview could go something like this. 'What's your name?' Reply 'Fish and chips.' 'What did you have for breakfast...dinner...tea...? What shampoo do you use? What football team do you support? What do I look like? To all of these questions they have to reply 'Fish and chips' without smiling or laughing.	N	Y,R,G

Day 2: 5000 Fed...Follow that man!

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus acts powerfully like God to give us what we need. He is someone to follow.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** John 6:1-2, 5-14, 35



¹Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or Lake Tiberias). ²Many people followed him because they saw the miracles he did to heal the sick.

⁵Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. He said to Philip, “where can we buy bread for all these people to eat?” ⁶(Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do).

⁷Philip answered, “We would all have to work a month to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece.”

⁸Another follower there was Andrew. He was Simon Peter’s brother. Andrew said, ⁹“Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people.

¹⁰Jesus said, “Tell the people to sit down.” This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men who sat down there. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves of bread. He thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.

¹²They all had enough to eat. When they had finished, Jesus said to his followers, “Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don’t waste anything.” ¹³So they gathered up the pieces that were left. They filled 12 large baskets with the pieces that were left of the five barley loaves.

¹⁴The people saw this miracle that Jesus did. They said, “He must truly be the Prophet who is coming into the world.”

³⁵Then Jesus said, “I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty.”

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

a. The mystery:

Jesus can make wine from water. He has also gained a large following through his ability to heal. There are some magicians who might *claim* to do similar things, but in today’s passage Jesus does things which even amazed his friends who have, we saw, already believed. Their view of Jesus needs to get even bigger – and so does ours.

b. The clues:

- Jesus has clearly done many healings (6:2) that are not mentioned and his fame has spread still further.
- The crowd that followed Jesus had 5000 men in it. That doesn't include the women and children that would have made it larger still. It was a HUGE crowd. Jesus fed each person using just 5 small loaves and 2 fish – and there was masses to spare. And NO, it was not just a case of everyone suddenly sharing any food they might have had on them – the disciples were eyewitnesses of all these miracles and they had seen what Jesus had done up to now, and it rightly AMAZED them. The people who had been fed also wanted to make Jesus their king (6v15). This is an extraordinary miracle.
- The Jewish people who were fed would have known that something very special was going on. Back in their history God had been the one who had miraculously fed the people in the desert when, under Moses, he had brought them out of Egypt. Now they were being fed miraculously in the desert again – no wonder they thought Jesus was the expected Prophet.
- Jesus here controlled the very fabric of nature. He's doing "God stuff."

c. The conclusion:

Jesus is in control of creation. He is more than a prophet or king – he is the creator who can bend the laws of nature. He is God on earth.

⊕ **Group Time Ideas: John 6: 1-2, 5-14, 35**

- **'Big Idea':** *Jesus acts powerfully like God to give us what we need. He is someone to follow.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.01	Choose from one of the "getting-to-know-you" activities/games from day 1.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.02	Children can continue to decorate folders if they were given on the first day.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.03	Inside my Lunchbox. First child says "Inside my lunchbox I have....." adding an item of their choice. The next child repeats what the first child has said and then adds an item of their choice. As each child has a turn the list gets longer and harder to remember!	N	Y,R,G,B
2.04	Picnic basket. Children sit in a circle. Give each person the name of a food or drink. One person stands in the centre of the circle. Call out 2 items of food. Those people have to swap places while the person in the middle tries to get into their place. If you call "picnic basket" everyone has to move places.	N	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.05	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also an accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.06	Colouring Picture: Two different pictures to colour that point to the events of the story.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.07	Tell the story. Tell the story using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G,B
2.08	Word Search. Word search puzzle with 15 words to find that relate to the Bible story from John 6	Y	Y,R,G

2.09	"Cranium": The Facts of the Case: Divide group into 2 teams. Children have to act out, draw or model with plasticine various simple words from the story. When their team guesses the word they receive a story piece and another word to act/draw/model. The first team to get all the clues, story pieces and put them in the correct order wins.	Y	Y,R
2.10	Making Binoculars: Collect together cardboard tubes and tape pairs together with parcel tape. Attach strong of ribbon so that the children can hang them around their necks. They then can be decorated with sticky shapes etc. Point: When detectives follow people they need binoculars so that they don't miss a thing – and we don't want to miss any of the clues about Jesus as we follow him.	N	Y,R
2.11	Follow the footprints: Can the children work out which animal made which print?	Y	Y,R,G
2.12	Observation skills: A key detective skill. Fill a jar with loads of small sweets. Haribo do fish shapes which would be perfect. Each child can see if they can count how many sweets there are in the jar. The closest guess wins a prize (or a bigger share of the sweets). Point: An intro to today's story about a vast number of people and vast amounts of food.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.13	Under the Magnifying Glass 2: For older groups, a chance to look at the passage in more detail for themselves.	Y	Y,R,G
2.14	Follow that Man Rap: A fun way to explore the story and develop some rapping skills. Feel free to bring a backing track to help you keep the beat!	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.15	Puzzle page: activities to complete that revisit important parts of today's story.	Y	
2.16	Sniffer dogs: Put some different smelly things in pots of jars – e.g. egg, cheese, vinegar, coffee etc. If you can include some fish – or a fish finger to connect with the story, even better! Blindfold a child and see if they can identify the food by the smell alone.	N	R,G,B
2.17	Evidence poster: See day 1. In the second quarter get the children to stick pictures related to the story (bread, fish, baskets etc). As they do talk about what this evidence tells us about who Jesus is. At the bottom of the collage/poster add any new observations they have learnt about Jesus today.	Y	Y,R,G
2.18	Spot the Mistake Story: Read out the version of the story from the resource sheet and see if the children can identify all 12 mistakes. Point: a good detective needs to be able to spot mistakes in a story.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.19	Code Maker and Breaker: Create coded messages to a using your code maker wheel. Decode the message that relates to today's story using the wheel.	Y	Y,R,G

2.20	Enough: Colour the spaces with the correct colour to reveal a big clue that something amazing has happened in the story today.	N	Y,R
2.21	Impossible: Can you find your way through the "impossible maze" to the miracle? Tricky maze and colouring picture with memory verse	N	Y,R
2.22	Observation Training: Can you spot all the hidden baskets in the picture and work out how many baskets of leftovers there were after Jesus fed 5000 people.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.23	Loaves and Fish Basket Craft: The template can be coloured and cut out, the two pieces of the basket stuck together at the ends and the fish/bread stuck/stapled into the basket.	N	G,B
2.24		N	Y,R
2.25		N	G,B
		Y (see day 1)	Y,R,G
		Y	Y,R,G

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.28	Card Collect Race. Parts of the story are written out on strips of card. Children are in 2 teams. They race to a pile and bring a card back. When all pieces are collected, the team has to put them in order. One person from the winning team retells the story.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.29	Hunt the thimble: Hide a thimble (or other small object) somewhere in your group area. The children have to try and find it as you give them clues. Say "warm" or "cold" to help the younger children locate the item. Give other more challenging clues for the older children. Point: finding small clues that might be important is a vital part of a detective's job. Can we find out all the clues to work out who Jesus really is?	N	Y,R,G,B
2.30		N	Y,R
2.31		N	Y,R,G,B
2.32		Y	Y,R,G

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.33	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: S orry, T hanks, O thers, P lease, (Alternative ACTS: A doration, C onfession, T hanksgiving, S upplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Thanks'. You could, for example, thank God for all the ways he provides for us – especially in sending us Jesus.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.34	Thank	N	Y,R,G,B
2.35		Y	Y,R,G,B
2.36	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

Day 3: Blind man healed...Witness statements!

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Even his enemies can't deny it, Jesus is "the light of the world." Do we see?*

⊕ **Today's passage:** John 9:1-12 (13-34)



¹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ²His followers asked him, "Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind – his own sin or his parents' sin?"

³Jesus answered, "It is not this man's sin or his parents' sin that caused him to be blind. This man was born blind so that God's power could be shown in him. ⁴While it is day time, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent me. The night is coming. And no one can work at night. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

⁶After Jesus said this, he spat on the ground and made some mud with it. He put the mud on the man's eyes. ⁷Then he told the man, "Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam." (Siloam means Sent.) So the man went to the pool. He washed and came back. And he was able to see.

⁸Some people had seen this man begging before. They and the man's neighbours said, "Look! Is this the same man who always sits and begs?"

⁹Some Said, "Yes! He is the one." But others said, "No, he's not the same man. He only looks like him."

So, the man himself said, "I am the man."

¹⁰They asked, "What happened?" How did you get your sight?"

¹¹He answered them, "The man named Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and came back seeing."

¹²They asked him, "Where is this man?"

The man answered, "I don't know."

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

a. The mystery:

Jesus is God on earth, so why doesn't everyone trust and follow him? The evidence seems clear – but the religious authorities wanted to kill him, many who had followed went on to desert him – and even Jesus' disciples were tempted to abandon him (6:66). Perhaps today's miracle can help us understand...

b. The clues:

- Jesus here clearly shows his compassion towards this man Jesus here clearly shows his compassion as uniquely he rubs mud on the man's eyes to heal him, rather than with just a word. For a blind man this must have been very significant – there was no doubt that it really was him that Jesus intended to heal.
- The evidence here is very compelling and the whole passage has a very first hand feel. The man knew Jesus' name, but didn't know where he was – he had been sent off to wash and never having seen Jesus' face he would have been unable to identify him. His parents just want to keep out of trouble.
- At first sight this is just another healing miracle, but Jesus makes sure we see its significance. In 9:5 Jesus says "I am the light for the world". Throughout the chapter we see the theme of light and dark and sight and blindness. Jesus is the one who gives sight and light in a dark world.
- The fact that not everyone accepts the evidence does not mean that the evidence is faulty, but rather that – according to Jesus – people are blind and unable to see.

c. The conclusion:

Jesus is the light of the world. If we want to see ourselves and the world correctly we need his help. If we want to understand who he is, what he can do for us and how to respond to him we need to have our eyes opened like the blind man.

Group Time Ideas: John 9:1-12 (13-24)

- **'Big Idea':** *Even his enemies can't deny it, Jesus is "the light of the world." Do we see?*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.01	Get to know you game – choose from the selection at the end of day one.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.02	Blind Walk. Children hold on to one another's waists and walk around a designated area (blindfolded or eyes shut) with the leader at the head.	N	Y,R,G
3.03	Feely bags. Children to guess articles in cloth bag. For older children you could put more obscure items in and/or get them to draw what they feel.	N	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.04	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.05	Tell the story. Tell the story using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G
3.06	Keep your eyes open quiz: A chance to revisit the key parts of today's story and to think about its significance.	Y	Y,R,G
3.07	Blindfold Challenge: Blindfold a child (or two children) and get them to try and draw something (a person, car, house etc) while blindfolded. Take the blindfolds off and talk about the drawings. Why was it so difficult? What will happen if we try and make sense of life without knowing or understanding who Jesus is?		Y,R
3.08	The right lens: Bring in a magnifying glass in or a pair of glasses or a binoculars. Get the children to use them to observe things closely.	Y	R,G,B

3.09	Eye Test Chart: Put the chart on a board or wall and see how the children do – can they also work out the hidden message? Be sensitive to those who have poor eyesight! Point: a detective's medical is very important to make sure that they are up to the job. Also a chance to explore the idea of "seeing" who Jesus really is through the evidence today.	Y	R,G,B
3.10	Blind Man Sees Word Search. Find the 15 words that are linked to today's Bible story.	Y	R,G,B
3.11	Witnesses: Get one of the leaders to secretly move away from the group (somewhere that they can't be seen, having taken a piece of "equipment" e.g. folders, pens etc. "What is missing? Who took it? What do they look like – hair, eye colour, clothes etc. If they are artistic they could draw the culprit. Point: Today we see the blind man having to give witness statements to the Pharisees – telling them very simply that he could now see. The children might not have remembered everything – if something really important happened they would!	N	Y,R
3.12	Blindfold puzzles: Bring in some simple puzzles e.g. toddler style jigsaw puzzle. Blindfold a child and see if they can complete it. You could make it a competition by timing different children. Repeat, this time with the blindfold off. Point: Problem solving is a key detective skill – and it is much easier when you can see clearly. This is a link to today's story – Jesus heals a blind man and also tells us that he is the Light of the World – with him we can make sense of all the clues and see clearly.	N	Y,R,G,B
	Jesus Light of the World Hats: Cut strips of yellow or orange card long enough to fit around the children's heads. Staple 2 pieces together if necessary. Cut out simple shapes in advance (suns, moons, stars, light bulbs, candles etc. The children stick the shapes onto their hats which are then stapled to fit. Add the title "Jesus is the Light of the World." Point – a take home reminder of who Jesus is.		
	Press conference: When a great mystery is solved, the police hold a press conference to give the press the chance to ask any questions about the case. The children can ask any questions that have come up during the day or week. To make it more fun, make a microphone and set up your area like a press conference. If you can get the questions in advance it will give you some more time to think them through or ask for help.		

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.19	Stepping stones. Divide group into 2 teams. Each person has 2 pieces of newspaper to use as stepping stones. Mark out an area that has to be crossed. The first person puts both feet on 1 piece of paper and places the other piece in front of them. They then stand on that piece with both feet, bend down to pick up the first piece and put that in front. This is repeated until that person reaches the other side.	N	Y,R,G,B

3.20	Cranium. Leader has a list of words – ideally connected to the day's story. The group is divided into two teams. One by one each member of the team runs to the leader to receive the word clue. The children have to act out (charades), draw or model with plasticine the word they've been given. N.B. They are <i>not allowed to speak</i> . When the team thinks it has identified the word the next member runs to the leader with the answer. If correct they receive the next word. Team wins that guesses all their words.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.21	Impossible. Divide the group into two teams. Give each team a bowl of popcorn or some sort of sweets (check for allergies). Give the teams time to confer among themselves. When the leader says "go" the first time has five seconds to say something Jesus did that would have seemed impossible to those around him. If they can say it in the 5 seconds then all team members get to eat a bite of popcorn. If they can't, then the other team gets to eat a bite of their popcorn. Teams take turns until all the popcorn is gone.	N	Y,R,G

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.22	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please, (Alternative ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Others'. Don't only feel you can pray for those we know – you may want to include people in other parts of the world in tough places. In the light of today's theme, it would be good to pray that those facing tough situations would discover that Jesus saves and they can trust him.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.23	Prayer Banner. Use the Light bulb templates for children to write their prayer on. Talk about what new things they have discovered about Jesus this week and get them to write down their responses on the template. Say thank you prayers for what they have learned and to say sorry for the ways we have closed our eyes to his reality and the evidence of his Lordship and love.	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.24	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

Day 4: Dead man alive...Your verdict!

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *As promised, Jesus comes back from the dead. What do we make of the evidence and his power to give real life?*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** John 20:1-8, 19-20, 24-31



¹Early on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb. It was still dark. Mary saw that the large stone had been moved away from the tomb. ²So Mary ran to Simon Peter and the other follower (the one Jesus loved). Mary said, “they have taken the Lord out of the tomb. We don’t know where they have put him.”

³So Peter and the other follower started for the tomb. ⁴They were both running, but the other follower ran faster than Peter. So the other follower reached the tomb first. ⁵He bent down and looked in. He saw the strips of linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in. ⁶Then following him came Simon Peter. He went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there. ⁷He also saw the cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up and laid in a different place from the strips of linen. ⁸Then the other follower, who had reached the tomb first also went in. He saw and believed.

¹⁹It was the first day of the week. That evening the followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the Jews. Then Jesus came and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hand and his side. The followers were very happy when they saw the Lord.

²⁴Thomas (called Didymus) was not with the followers when Jesus came. Thomas was one of the 12. ²⁵The other followers told Thomas, “We have seen the Lord.”

But Thomas said, “I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands. And I will not believe it until I put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side.”

²⁶A week later the followers were in the house again. Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here. Look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly happy."

²⁹Jesus did many other miracles in front of his followers that are not written in this book. ³¹But these are written so that you can believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, you can have life through his name.

⊕ Bible notes and background:

a. The Mystery:

Jesus, the one who claims to be able to give us life has been crucified and killed. It seems as though the author and giver of life has been defeated by death and his claims have been destroyed with him. It looks as though those that have believed in and followed Jesus have been mistaken about him. Today's clue about the identity of Jesus is the biggest yet – and the final piece of the puzzle. Even those who doubted Jesus are amazed and convinced that Jesus is God's King and Son and has the power to give us life.

b. The clues:

- Even though Jesus had predicted on many occasions that he would die and on the 3rd day come back to life, it's clear that his disciples and followers were not expecting him to. The resurrection is not about people wishing something so badly that they finally convince themselves it's true!
- The resurrection of Jesus is based on evidence seen by many different people. First the women discover that Jesus' body is gone. Then the disciples meet the risen Jesus and see him for themselves.
- Even the most sceptical have their doubts removed and are able to rightly identify Jesus.

c. The verdict

We can't ignore Jesus' claims about himself, and the resurrection of Jesus allows us to reach a verdict about him. If Jesus is able to defeat death he must be the One to give us life.

Group Time Ideas: John 20:1-8, 19-20, 24-31

⊕ **'Big Idea':** *Jesus calms a storm and shows his authority over nature.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.01	Get to know you game – choose from the selection at the end of day one.		Y,R,G,B
4.02	Dead or Alive: Children enjoy taking each other's pulse. Show them youngest how to do this. Place the children in order according to who has the fastest and the slowest. Think of other ways you might tell someone is dead or alive!		

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.03	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.04	Tell the story. Tell the story or explain the meaning of the passage using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G
4.05	Dead Man Alive Word Search: Word search with 15 words to find from today's Bible passage	Y	Y,R,G
4.06	Jesus is Alive! Simple bookmark to make and colour with verse from today's passage. You could use a hole punch to give the bookmarks a "tail".	Y	Y,R,G
4.07	Colouring page (1): The disciples arrive at the empty tomb.	N	Y,R,G
4.08	Colouring page (2): Simpler colouring page of Jesus' encounter with Thomas.	Y	G,B
4.09	Totally Unexpected: As a warn up prepare several containers with what is written on the outside being completely different from the container's contents. Ask the children to guess the contents. At the end ask the children what the contents had in common. Ans: They were totally unexpected. Today's story contains a massive surprise. Were the disciples expecting Jesus to rise again? Should they have been so surprised?	N	Y,R,G,B

4.10	Mini Drama: Your verdict: You could set up a mock "trial" with helpers and get the children to act as lawyers and witnesses and the remaining children as the jury. This is an opportunity to present the evidence for the Resurrection to your groups. You might want to bring other evidence from outside the passage also. For this to work you will probably need to explore some of the evidence first. Props and dressing up clothes will help!	Y (2)	Y,R,G,B
4.11	3-D hidden image: If you haven't already use one, this is a fun activity as the children try and see the hidden object. Point: talk about how the Resurrection was what finally made sense of everything else for Jesus' disciples. Once they knew he was risen even Thomas got "the whole picture".	Y	R,G,B
4.12	Simple tracts on the evidence/meaning of the Resurrection: If you are organised you might want to get hold of some creative and colourful tracts that put forward the evidence for the Resurrection for children. Here are some possible suggestions that could be ordered cheaply and quickly: Why did Jesus Rise (Alison Mitchell) – Good Book Co, 25p The Easter Mystery (Alison Mitchell) – Good Book Co, 25p Three Days that Shook the World (Pete Woodcock) – Good Book Co., 40p	Y	Y,R,G
4.13	Questions Questions: If you haven't done so already, encourage the children to write down any questions about Jesus that they have thought of during the week and put them into a collection box. Find a time during the day to answer those questions (get help from other leaders and encouragers if you need it!). Make sure that the children don't go home at the end of the week with unanswered questions about Jesus.	Y	R,G,B
4.14	Who Am I? You will need a post-it note for each child. Write on each the name of a character (real or fiction, historical or celebrity). Stick a note on the back of each child. Do not let them see what is written on their own note. They have to guess who they are by asking questions eg Am I male or female, real or fiction, hero or villain? etc. Give one person a note that says Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God. Be aware that this person might not guess who they are so choose someone who will not feel embarrassed about this.	Y	Y,R,G
4.15	Cross Tag. aka Stuck in the Mud. One child is 'It' and chases the other children. If tagged, they must stand still and put out their arms to make a cross shape. They can only be freed if another child stands in front of them, puts up their own arms and takes their place. Reinforce the message that Jesus went to the cross to set us free.	Y	Y,R,G,B

4.16	Eye Witness Hockey. You will need 2 rolled up newspapers and a beanbag. Divide your group into 2 teams. One person from each team acts as a reporter. They should be blindfolded and should sit on chairs facing away from the playing area so that they can only listen to the game. Play a 3 minute game of hockey. Then ask the reporters to describe the game. Can they identify details of the game - who won, who scored etc? Do they agree on details? Discuss how credible their reports are and how much better an eye witness account would be. Remind the children that we have first hand eye witness accounts of the resurrection so we can believe.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.17	Big Art. You will need a long strip of wallpaper or lining paper taped to your table. Invite each child to draw their favourite bit of today's story. Talk about it as they draw.	Y	Y,R,G
4.18	Stop doubting and believe. Write the words 'Stop doubting and believe' on a sheet of white paper with a white wax crayon. It will appear to the children that there is nothing on the paper. Loosely fold and dip the paper into a glass of water containing four or five drops of red food colouring. After about a minute, remove the paper and unfold onto a dry paper towel. The message will become visible. Talk about how Jesus had told the disciples that he would die and rise again but they didn't understand until after the resurrection. The white message on white paper represents how the disciples could not see his meaning. The red food colouring represents Christ's blood. By his death and resurrection, the message became clear.	N	Y,R,G,B
	The Mystery of the Missing Corpse. Follow a trail to find the Bible verses and clues. Cut out the bible verses and attach them (in order) to a line of wool some distance apart. Lay them out as a trail. The children follow the wool to the first section. Read the verses and then discuss and record the important clues from the section. When the trail is complete and all verses read, repeat the clues and ask 'Where is the missing corpse?' Remind them that a corpse is a dead body. There was no dead body because Jesus was alive. Finish by reading verses 29-31.	Y	
	Resurrection Roll. You will need a dice and a marked out area, large enough for all the children to stand in. Use a long rope or masking tape. This represents the tomb. Odd numbers on the dice represent Friday and even numbers represent Sunday. Before the dice is rolled, the children predict whether it will land on Friday or Sunday and choose to be in the tomb or out of the tomb. If it lands on Friday, those who chose 'out of the tomb' are out. If it lands on Sunday, those who chose 'in the tomb' are out. The leader rolls the dice 3 times and children can choose a different place each time or stay where they are (unless they are out). Whoever lasts all 3 rolls wins.		
	Dead or Alive? Best played where you can see the inside and outside of the tent, if possible. Leader calls out and points to various items. If it is alive, the children should jump up and shout 'Alive!' If not alive, they should sit still and whisper 'Dead'. Later on, discuss how they decided if something was dead or alive.		

	Amazing: Divide group into 2 teams. Each team has 2 chairs facing each other with some distance between them. On one chair is a pile of confetti. The aim of the game is to move the confetti to the other chair. The catch is that you can move the confetti using only a balloon. Begin by running the balloon on your head 5 or 6 times. Then bring the balloon to the confetti. Take confetti to other chair and take/rub off with hands. Take balloon back to next teammate. Game ends when all confetti is transferred. Seems amazing? Hard to explain? The Resurrection was truly amazing and confirms that Jesus is God's Son and King.		
	World Tile Game: Run a relay type race where children collect the pieces that reveal something about Jesus from today's story. Children could collect each piece of the statement after answering a question about the passage etc.		

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.19		N	Y,R,G,B
4.20	Parachute ball game: Get hold of a parachute (if you can't find one a bed sheet will work). 1. Calm sea: Roll a ball around the outside edge of the parachute (each child will have to gently raise and dip the parachute to keep the ball moving in the right direction). 2. Stormy sea: divide group into two teams one each side of the parachute. The aim is to bounce the ball so high that it goes over the heads of the opposing team.	N	Y,R,G
4.21		Y	Y,R,G,B
4.22		Y	Y,R,G,B
4.23		N	Y,R,G,B
4.24		N	Y,R,G,B

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.25	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: S orry, T hanks, O thers, P lease, (Alternative ACTS: A doration, C onfession, T hanksgiving, S upplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Please'. As the children pray for themselves it would be good to pray in the light of today's message.	N	Y,R,G,B
4.26	Prayer Banner. Give each child a boat template and encourage them to write a prayer on the sail. Encourage the children to pray their prayer out before fixing it to the banner. On this last day you might encourage them to include 1: Thanks for something they have received from God 2: Something they will give or share from this week. 3. Something they have learned about God this week. 4. A question they would like answered about God.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.27	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

‘Bible Time’ ideas and questions:

Group times provide a great opportunity to explore the message of the Bible together in all kinds of creative ways. During your first group time each morning, it would be helpful to spend some time looking at the day’s Bible passage together and reflecting on its meaning with your children.



It is worth remembering that the Bible passage will have been unpacked in the “All Together” time, so there should be scope for recapping and clarifying as you get a feel for what has been understood.

How long you spend looking at the passage and the depth of exploration will largely depend on the age of your children, but even if you have just a short time exploring the story, doing this well and enthusiastically will model something important to your group and hopefully shape the remainder of your time together.

As with any Bible study, the key is having some good questions ready that will unlock the main ideas and direct you towards some appropriate applications.

Below, for each of the 4 passages, you will find a skeleton Bible study.* The questions have been divided up into three sections: ‘way in’, ‘observation’ and ‘deeper’. The first section is designed to introduce the theme, the second to encourage investigation, and the final section to explore the avenues of application and to grapple with the deeper message of the passage.

N.B. *You will need to adapt and select the questions for your own groups.* If you are working with younger children some of the questions (especially in the last section) will prove too demanding and you may want to skip them or come up with better or more age-appropriate ones. You may be surprised by how much the children are able to grasp, especially if they are encouraged to “hunt for clues” and are given help along the way.

Finally, enthusing others about the passage each day will be easier when we, as leaders, have been excited by its message!

* If you want to be able to edit the questions or copy out the passage for your group, you can access this document and its content online at: <http://www.backpackers-online.org.uk/>

Day 1 Bible Time: *Water into wine...someone to be watched!*

Mark 1:14-20:



¹Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. ³When all the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴Jesus answered, "Dear woman, why come to me? My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you to do."

⁶In that place there were six stone water jars. The Jews used jars like these in their washing ceremony. Each jar held about 100 litres.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled the jars to the top. ⁸Then he said to them, "Now take some out and give it to the master of the feast."

So the servants took the water to the master. ⁹When he tasted it, the water had become wine. He did not know where the wine came from. But the servants who brought the water knew. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have been drinking a lot, they serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine till now."

¹¹So in Cana of Galilee, Jesus did his first miracle. There he showed his glory, and his followers believed in him.

Way in:

- Have you ever met someone really important or special? What was it like? Did you realise who they were from the beginning – or later on? Were there any clues to suggest they were special or important?

Observation:

- Where did this wedding take place and who are we told had been invited?
- What happened at this wedding and why might this have been such a disaster?



[Weddings were big deals in Jesus' day and the celebrations often lasted for days. The end of the wine meant the end of the celebrating and would have been a big embarrassment to the person in charge of the festivities and to the couple and their family].

- Why do you think Jesus' mother tells Jesus about the wine running out? What might she hoped he would do?

[Mary knows Jesus was special and could be trusted in this situation. But it was unlikely that she expected Jesus to act in the way that he did!]

- What does Jesus tell the servants to do?
- When the master tastes the drink taken from one of the jars, what does he discover? Why is he so surprised?

[It's not just that the water has turned to wine – the master doesn't know that what he is drinking once was water. But he is amazed at the fact that it's the best wine he's tasted].

- What is the result of the miracle for Jesus' followers? What does it mean that they "believed in him"?

[Believed has the idea of trusting and relying. It is more than simply saying Jesus is amazing and powerful – but living knowing this is true. You might want to think about ways we might do that e.g. asking for help when we are faced with problems or challenges. Try and think of concrete examples that will help the children grasp what this might mean].

Deeper:

- In the Old Testament God talks about a day in the future when there will be the greatest feast and celebration, including an abundance of the best wine that he himself will provide. As Jesus provides a "taster" of what is to come, does he give us a clue about his own identity?

[This first miracle is a big signpost – a huge clue. As Jesus does a "God thing" that no ordinary person could do, he is making a bold claim to be God in God's world. We will see more clues that will provide further evidence through the week, so encourage the children to keep alert for those clues!]

- Jesus could have just changed the water into OK wine (that would have been amazing). Instead he changed it into the BEST and most DELICIOUS wine. What do you think that means for us if we allow Jesus to get involved in our lives? What sort of life does he want to give us, do you think?

[Many people think that allowing Jesus to be in charge of our lives means life will be boring or dull or miserable. You might want to think why some of our friends might think that. It might be good to take them to John 10:10b where Jesus says that he has come to give us life – and not just any life – but life to the full! Again you might want to explore why the life he offers us is so amazing – indeed, the BEST life].



- (For older children) Weddings bring people together. The Bible talks about a day when we enjoy the most amazing friendship with God that can begin now. For us to enjoy that friendship Jesus first had to deal with the wrong things we have done that spoil that friendship. When Jesus says “his time hasn't come yet” can you think what event he is thinking about. (John 12:23-24, John 13:1)

[Even as Jesus begins his public life the time or “hour” of his death is in view. It is this key event that will make it possible for each of us to know forgiveness and enjoy friendship with God. Interestingly, the water jars were used for washing before people could approach God for worship – the miracle points to the ‘wine’ of Jesus’ own blood – his life - that will be given on the Cross so that we might draw near to God as his friends].

- The miracle that Jesus does reveals his glory. What do we discover about how special Jesus is in this story?

[Jesus is clearly special and something of his “specialness” is on view. His creative power takes us back to the beginning of the Bible – and to creation. His care for people is also in view as he acts to rescue a wedding. Nothing is impossible for Jesus or his power. You might want to think of other things we know Jesus did that reveal his power and care. Jesus turns the “ordinary” into the “best” and Christians are those who trust him to do that for us and for our lives. Jesus is clearly no “party pooper” – and contrary to popular belief – trusting Jesus is not the start of a dull, miserable, joyless existence – let the party begin!

- The disciples believe – or put their faith – in Jesus. What do you think that means? How do we show that we have put our trust in Jesus?

[Again, think of some concrete examples of what it means to trust Jesus in life. You might want to share some experiences where you have had to trust Jesus when it has been challenging or difficult. The story also shows that trusting Jesus means listening to his commands and instructions. Interestingly, this is the route to joy and gladness, not to being miserable!].

Day 2 Bible Time: *Feeding 5000...follow that man!*

Mark 4:1-9:



¹After this, Jesus went across Lake Galilee (or Lake Tiberias).
²Many people followed him because they saw the miracles he did to heal the sick. ³Jesus went up on a hill and there sat down with his followers. ⁴It was almost the time for the Jewish Passover Feast.

⁵Jesus looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him. He said to Philip, "where can we buy bread for all these people to eat?" ⁶(Jesus asked Philip this question to test him. Jesus already knew what he planned to do).

⁷Philip answered, "We would all have to work a month to buy enough bread for each person here to have only a little piece."

⁸Another follower there was Andrew. He was Simon Peter's brother. Andrew said, ⁹"Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people."

¹⁰Jesus said, "Tell the people to sit down." This was a very grassy place. There were about 5,000 men who sat down there. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves of bread. He thanked God for the bread and gave it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish. He gave them as much as they wanted.

¹²They all had enough to eat. When they had finished, Jesus said to his followers, "Gather the pieces of fish and bread that were not eaten. Don't waste anything." ¹³So they gathered up the pieces that were left. They filled 12 large baskets with the pieces that were left of the five barley loaves.

¹⁴The people saw this miracle that Jesus did. They said, "He must truly be the Prophet who is coming into the world."

³⁵Then Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty."

Way in:

Way in:

Observation:

- What is the seed that Jesus is talking about? What do the different soils represent?



- Why is there no sign of a response on some types of soil? Why might some people show no response to the good news about Jesus?
- What happens to the seed that falls on the rocky ground? What is the problem here according to Jesus?
- Why can't the seed in the weedy soil grow well?
- What happened to the seed that fell on good soil? What is so amazing about the result?

Deeper:

- Plants need good roots if they are to keep growing – especially in tough places and conditions. How can we make sure that we have deep roots in Jesus?



- What are the things that can crowd out Jesus in our lives (the weeds and the thorns).
- How can we be rich soil for God's word, so that it grows in us and we produce good fruit?

Day 3 Bible Time: *Blind man healed – witness statements*

Mark 9: 1-12, 13-34



¹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. ²His followers asked him, “Teacher, whose sin caused this man to be born blind – his own sin or his parents’ sin?”

³Jesus answered, “It is not this man’s sin or his parents’ sin that caused him to be blind. This man was born blind so that God’s power could be shown in him. ⁴While it is day time, we must continue doing the work of the One who sent me. The night is coming. And no one can work at night. ⁵While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

⁶After Jesus said this, he spat on the ground and made some mud with it. He put the mud on the man’s eyes. ⁷Then he told the man, “Go and wash in the Pool of Siloam.” (Siloam means Sent.) So the man went to the pool. He washed and came back. And he was able to see.

⁸Some people had seen this man begging before. They and the man’s neighbours said, “Look! Is this the same man who always sits and begs?”

⁹Some Said, “Yes! He is the one.” But others said, “No, he’s not the same man. He only looks like him.”

So, the man himself said, “I am the man.”

¹⁰They asked, “What happened?” How did you get your sight?”

¹¹He answered them, “The man named Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. Then he told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed and came back seeing.”

¹²They asked him, “Where is this man?”
The man answered, “I don’t know.”

Way in:

- Have you ever been in a situation where you were totally helpless? Describe the situation. How did you feel?



Observation:

- How bad was the situation when Jairus first came to Jesus? What clues do we have that show us how Jairus was feeling?
- Jairus still had hope. Why had he come to Jesus and what did he want Jesus to do?

- How did the situation become much worse? What shows that people now thought things were beyond hope? How would Jairus be feeling at this point in the story?
- What does Jesus say to Jairus? If others feel hopeless and afraid, what do Jesus' words tell us about how Jesus was feeling?
- Describe the scene as Jesus arrived at Jairus' home. Why do the mourners laugh when he tells them that the girl is sleeping?
- How does Jesus raise the girl from death? What is the response of the people who are there?

Deeper:

- When we face a situation that is completely beyond us, what do we need most?
- If Jesus is the one person who has power over death what should be our response to him?
- Some people think that they don't need to bother about Jesus or that he is irrelevant to life. After exploring this story, do you think they are right? Why/why not?



Day 4 Bible Time: Seaside Sensation

Mark 4:35-41:



³⁵ That evening, Jesus said to his followers, "Come with me across the lake." ³⁶ He and the followers left the people there. They went in the boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them.

³⁷ A very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves began coming over the sides and into the boat. It was almost full of water. ³⁸ Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, "Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!"

³⁹ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. He said, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

⁴⁰ Jesus said to his followers, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ The followers were very afraid and asked each other, "What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Way in:

- Describe a time when you felt *really* scared.

Observation:

- Whose idea was it for the disciples to go across to the other side of the lake?



- How can you tell this was no ordinary storm the disciples are facing? How were the disciples feeling at this point?
- When they woke Jesus up, what question did they ask Jesus? What do you think they wanted Jesus to do?

- What does Jesus do, and what happens as a result? How can we be sure this was something supernatural?
- Put yourself in the boat – how would you have felt after seeing what Jesus has just done?

Deeper:



- Jesus asks his followers, “Where is your faith?” Why should they have trusted Jesus, even in this bad situation?
- After Jesus calms the storm, the followers of Jesus are now very afraid. Why do you think that is?
- What obvious question do the disciples ask? How would we answer that question ourselves?
- Jesus makes the promise that he will never leave us or abandon us if we trust him. Think of situations (in our own lives?) where that is really wonderful to know.

Simplified Bible Passages:

Here are the four Bible stories written in a slightly more accessible way for the youngest children. Thinking of ways to make the stories more visual and finding words to explain the big concepts simply will be helpful as you try and communicate them and their message.

⊕ Day one passage (simplified):

Mark 1:14-20

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

¹⁴ Jesus went into Galilee and told people the Good News from God. ¹⁵ He said, “The right time is now here. God’s kingdom has come! Change your hearts and lives, and believe the Good News!”

¹⁶ Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw Simon and his brother Andrew. These two men were fishermen, and they were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come and follow me, and I will make you a different kind of fishermen. You will catch people, not fish.” ¹⁸ Straightaway they left their nets and followed Jesus.

¹⁹ Still walking by the Lake, Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, getting their nets ready to catch fish. ²⁰ When Jesus saw the two brothers, he told them to come with him. They left their dad and followed Jesus.

⊕ Day two passage (simplified):

Mark 4:1-9

A Story About a Farmer Sowing Seed

¹ One time Jesus began teaching by the lake, and lots of people came to hear him. He got into a boat so that he could sit and teach from the lake. All the people stayed on the beach next to the water. ² Jesus used stories to teach the people many things. One of his stories went like this:

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant seed. ⁴ While he was scattering the seed, some of it fell on the path. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where there was not enough earth. At first it grew really quickly there because the soil was not deep. ⁶ But then the sun rose and the plants were burned. They died because they did not have deep roots. ⁷ Some other seed fell on ground full of weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. So they did not make the grain they were meant to. ⁸ But some of the seed fell on good ground. There it began to grow, and it made grain. Some plants made 30 times more grain, some 60 times more, and some 100 times more.”

⁹ Then Jesus said, “You people who hear me, listen!”

⊕ Day three passage (simplified):

Mark 5:21-23, 35-43

Jesus gives a dead girl her life back

²¹ Jesus went back to the other side of the lake in the boat and lots of people joined him by the shore. ²² An important man called Jairus came to Jesus. ²³ He got on his knees and begged Jesus to come and make his sick daughter better. She was very ill and close to death.

³⁵ On the way some people arrived from the house of Jairus. "It's too late," they said, "Your daughter has died. Don't waste any more of Teacher Jesus' time."

³⁶ Jesus didn't seem worried and said to Jairus, "Don't be scared, just trust me."

³⁸ When Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus lots of people were crying very loudly and making a huge fuss.

³⁹ Jesus said, "Why are people so sad and making so much noise? The girl is not dead, she's just asleep."

⁴⁰ Everyone laughed at Jesus because they knew she really had died. Then Jesus went into the room where the girl was, along with her parents and three of his followers.

⁴¹ Jesus took the girl's hand and said, "Get up!"

⁴² Straight away the girl stood up and starting walking around. Everyone was amazed!

⁴³ "Don't tell everyone about this for now," said Jesus, "and give the girl some food to eat."

⊕ Day four passage (simplified):

Mark 4: 35-41

Jesus calms a big storm

³⁵ One evening Jesus said to his followers, “Come with me in the boat across the lake.” ³⁶ So they left all the crowds behind and got into the boat. ³⁷ A big wind began to blow, and the waves were so big that the boat began to fill with water. ³⁸ Jesus was at the back of the boat – asleep, with his head on a pillow. His followers woke him up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care? We are all about to drown!”

³⁹ Jesus stood up and gave orders to the wind and the waves. He said, “Quiet! Stop!” Straightaway the wind stopped blowing and the lake became completely calm.

⁴⁰ Jesus said to his followers, “Why were you so frightened? Don’t you trust me?”

⁴¹ The followers were really scared now and asked, “Who is this man, Jesus? Even the wind and waves do what he tells them to do!”

