

IGNITION: FOLLOW UP  
**LEADERS MANUAL**



IGNITE: A resource for getting to know Jesus

# IGNITE: A RESOURCE FOR GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

## LEADERS MANUAL

Over the next eight weeks we are going to be getting to know Jesus by reading portions of the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John is a biography of the life of Jesus. ‘Gospel’ means ‘good news’, and in the Bible there are four ‘good news’ biographical accounts of Jesus from four different authors, each showing different aspects of his life. Often, biographies start with information about someone’s birth. Instead of that, John chooses to introduce Jesus by focusing on some of the more spiritual aspects of his life, rather than on his birth as a human baby on earth.

This series builds on the six I AM statements Jesus makes in the Gospel of John to explore how Jesus is the one that can bring security, satisfaction, community, freedom and life to those who believe in him.

### How to use the Leaders Manual

This leader’s manual provides a helpful framework to guide people through the Gospel of John. If you need to pause, add, loop back again, or spend some necessary time in tangents, then that’s fine. Of course, there are plenty of tangents to explore, so sometimes it is best to listen to the question, acknowledge it as important, and put a ‘bookmark’ in it for later discussion so as not to get too side-tracked.

The questions in the leader’s manual are the same as the study guide; however, the leaders manual also has some guidance and extra information (INFO BOXES) to help guide your group in their journey of understanding Jesus in the Gospel of John.

You will find a Glossary of Bible Words at the end of this booklet which may come in handy for those in your group who have little or no knowledge of the Bible.

### CONTENTS

1. Who is Jesus? ..... Pages 3-8
2. Jesus is the Light of the World ..... Pages 9-14
3. Jesus is the Bread of Life ..... Pages 15-20
4. Jesus is the Good Shepherd ..... Pages 21-26
5. Jesus is the True Vine ..... Pages 27-30
6. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life ..... Pages 31-34
7. The Death and Resurrection of Jesus ..... Pages 35-38
8. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life ..... Pages 39-44

### APPENDIX

- a. Glossary of Bible Words ..... Pages 45-46



# WHO IS JESUS?

John 1:1-34

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would learn that Jesus is God, and that he came to earth to take away the sin of the world.
- Participants would be comfortable asking questions about Jesus and God.

It's great that the group has come together to discover who Jesus is and what that means for us. Encourage people that this group is a safe place to ask as many questions as they would like. Be ready to keep a list of questions asked (perhaps on a whiteboard/piece of paper visible by everyone) to remove the pressure on you to answer them as they are asked, and also show that this group values people expressing genuine questions/barriers to faith that participants might bring to these sessions. You may be able to cross some of them off the list as the sessions progress too!

**Think back to Ignition. What do you think Ignition was all about? Was there one key message you took away? Was there anything surprising?**

This is designed to get people thinking about the event and the gospel message they heard there. If you can, try to steer the conversation to the talk they heard and see if they can recall any key points. Don't worry if you can't steer it that way or they cannot remember much, there will be plenty of opportunities to reflect on the gospel over the next eight sessions.

## PRAY

It's always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Don't expect all or any participants to pray – perhaps just say that you will pray to begin and explain that prayer is just talking to God and people can join in and say Amen (I agree) at the end, or they can just listen.

## READ

Read: John 1:1-34

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



Read: John 20:30-31

**What can you expect to discover over the next eight weeks?**

Discuss together that the reason you are meeting in this group is so that we can discover the true identity of Jesus and believe in him. We unashamedly believe that following Jesus is the best way to live in the world, but we also recognise that it is each person's choice as to whether they will follow. We are simply trying to get people to make their own decision.

Read: John 1:1-18



**What do we learn about the Word? The light? The darkness?**

You might want to copy the below table on to a whiteboard or large piece of paper on the wall. Encourage participants to read and re-read the text until they have exhausted all the descriptions of the Word, the light and the darkness.

| John 1:1-18:        |  |
|---------------------|--|
| <b>The Word</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It was with God</li> <li>- It was God</li> <li>- It's a person</li> <li>- Everything made through him</li> <li>- In him is life – he is the light of men</li> <li>- Became flesh</li> <li>- Dwelt among us</li> <li>- The Word is Jesus</li> </ul>          |
| <b>The Light</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shines in the darkness</li> <li>- Is more powerful than the darkness</li> <li>- John bore witness about it</li> <li>- It's a person</li> <li>- He came into the world</li> <li>- The world didn't recognise him</li> <li>- The Word is the light</li> </ul> |
| <b>The Darkness</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cannot overcome the light</li> </ul>  |

## What is the relationship between the Word and the light?

They are the same thing! They are both talking about Jesus.

Next week we will be thinking more about Jesus as the light, but today we're going to zoom in on Jesus as the Word and think more about what that means.



**Compare John 1:1-3 with Genesis 1:1-3. Can you see any similarities?**

In the beginning...

Both mention God (Genesis poetically shows God who 'speaks' creation into existence. The 'word' of God seems integral to the character and action of God.)

Be prepared for people who may want to dive into current creation debates. Rather than get side-tracked, be ready to explain that Genesis isn't concerned with the "how" of creation so much as the "who" and "why". It really serves to introduce God as creator.

### INFO BOX: Jesus is the Word

John says that the Word is God and then goes on to assert that the Word was there before the foundation of the world. The double use of "in the beginning" in John 1:1-2 echoes the start of the creation narrative in Genesis 1. John then claims in 1:14 that this Word has become flesh and bone in the person of Jesus. The claim he makes is that the human Jesus is God walking among them. A claim like this would have surprised and outraged the original Jewish readers of this text who believed that a holy, unapproachable God would never stoop as low as becoming human, but rather remain accessible only in the temple and holy place established in the law of Moses in the very early days of the biblical nation of Israel.

## Why would God come to earth in the person of Jesus?

If participants are having trouble with this one, you can point them to verses 10-13. Jesus is in the world so that all who believe in him will become children of God. We can be part of God's family. We will see in the coming sessions why this is a good and desirable thing.

**It's a big claim to say that Jesus is God. If it's true, how do you think people should respond to him?**

They should probably listen seriously to what he has to say.

**Do you find it hard to believe that Jesus is God?**

Be sure to allow room for people to say that they do find it hard to believe this. There are a number of genuine barriers to faith, and it's good to be ready to accept these. Some may want you to prove that the Christian story is true – resist the temptation to engage in the debate and rather just acknowledge where people are at in their spiritual journey.

**Read: John 1:19-34**



**John's main job was to testify about the light (John 1:6-8) and in the verses we just read we see his testimony. As he is being quizzed by the religious leaders, what do you notice about his response?**

He doesn't claim to be someone he isn't, and he is confident in his testimony and confident that Jesus will appear. He is certain of the truth of what he is saying.

**When Jesus appears, who does John identify him as?**

- Lamb of God
- Takes away sin of the world
- He was before me
- The spirit from heaven remained on him
- Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit
- Jesus is the Son of God

### INFO BOX: Lamb of God

The Lamb of God is a significant title for Jesus. A lamb was a significant animal in the spiritual life of Israel. In order for God's people to meet with him, God required them to purify themselves of their sin. This was done by sacrificing an unblemished lamb on the altar. The sacrifice of one lamb represented the cleansing of one person, but the cleansing did not last. When Jesus is referred to as the Lamb of God he is channelling the same idea. As a human, he can stand in our place and take the punishment our sin deserves (death), and as God, his sacrifice is unlimited in its efficacy for all humans. Jesus is identified as the better and lasting sacrifice that will "take away the sin of the world" once for all.

**Jesus is identified as the one who "takes away the sin of the world". What do you think sin is?**

Let the group discuss this idea and see where people are at. Be prepared to hear that people think it's any and everything under the sun and be ready for some people to mention issues of sexuality. Have a working definition ready to share with the group. You can find one in the Glossary of Bible Words.

**Why do you think sin needs to be removed?**

This question is designed to see where people are at. We will talk more about this in coming sessions.

**How do you think Jesus removes the sin of the world?**

This question is designed to see where people are at. We will talk more about this in coming sessions.

## WRAP UP

**What have you learned about Jesus this week?**

Let participants throw around what they have taken away from this study. Try to use this time to sum up the big lesson this week: Jesus is God and came to earth to take away the sin of the world.

**What questions do you have about what we've read this week?**

We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. Not all questions need to be answered immediately.

## PRAY TO CLOSE

**You might pray:**

- Thanking God for sending Jesus to the world to take away sin
- Asking for help to understand the Bible
- For each group member to know Jesus

Don't expect all or any participants to pray – perhaps just say that you will pray, and people can join in and/or say Amen at the end, or they can just listen.





# JESUS IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

**John 8:12-36**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would see and believe that Jesus is the light of the world, and that his testimony is trustworthy.
- Participants would understand the far-reaching implications of sin in their own lives and see that true freedom comes from trusting in and following Jesus.

It's great that the group has come together to discover who Jesus is and what over the next few weeks we will be looking at some significant statements Jesus makes in John's gospel about who he is. These are known as the 'I AM' statements.

## PRAY

It's always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Don't expect all or any participants to pray – perhaps just say that you will pray to begin and explain that prayer is just talking to God and people can join in and say Amen (I agree) at the end, or they can just listen.

## READ

**Read: John 8:12-36**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 8:12-36**

**Who does Jesus claim to be?**

The light of the world.

**What is the contrast between darkness and light that Jesus mentions?**

If the light is connected to life, it seems logical that darkness would be connected with death.

**What do you think it means for Jesus to claim to be the light of the world?**

Let the group discuss this idea for a little while to see what they think. Guide the discussion, helping the group to see that Jesus is making big claims about who he is as well as what he does for those who choose to follow him. If you have time, you can explore the Isaiah passages listed in the leaders note.

### INFO BOX: Light

Jesus presents himself as the light of the world during the Feast of Tabernacles, a festival during which great candles lit up the courtyards of Jerusalem each evening. In this context, the allusion to the great candle-lighting ceremonies is unmistakable. But the claim has roots in Old Testament prophecies (Isaiah 42:6, 49:6, 51:4) which speak of the Servant of the Lord and the Lord himself as the light to the nations. Here too, as in John 1:1-18, light is linked with life. In other words, Jesus is contrasting the impressive, but limited, symbolic lights of the festival with himself as the unlimited light that brings life to those who follow him.



### Read: John 8:13-20

**What is the reaction of the Pharisees to Jesus’ claim to be the light of the world? What would your reaction be?**

Make sure the group looks at the text for their answers (v13). Encourage them to reflect on how they feel about Jesus’ claim. It’s clear that the Pharisees understand that Jesus is making unprecedented claims about himself, as they immediately challenge his validity as a witness.

**Who are the witnesses to Jesus’ claim? Are they reliable?**

Direct the discussion to the fact that first and foremost, Jesus himself is the witness to his own claim (8:14). In making the claim that his witness is sufficient he is asserting his own equality with God and perhaps trying to get the Pharisees to recall God’s promise to Abraham, where God swears by himself: “By myself I have sworn, declares the LORD...” (Gen 22:16) and later explained in Hebrews 6:13, “since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself.” Jesus is not subject to the validation of a higher authority—he is that authority. Perhaps as a condescension to their disbelief, Jesus does secondarily point to the Father as a witness, referring to God in heaven, but the Pharisees misunderstand and think he is speaking about an earthly father, revealing exactly how little they know about Jesus and the Father.

**Do you find his answer convincing?**

Help the group reflect on their own reaction to Jesus’ claim. Are they sceptical? Convinced? Do they need more information?



### Read: John 8:21-30

This could be a very confronting section to read. It may be helpful to preface this section with the reminder that Jesus is speaking to the religious guys who need a shake up to see the truth beyond their fanatical rule-keeping. The passage shows that there are only two possible outcomes when it comes to Jesus: either we believe he is who he says he is, or we disbelieve and die in our sins. Use your discretion to decide how to use this section based on who is in your group and where they are up to. It is always helpful to note that the Gospel is the antidote to the heaviness of dying in sin—the focus is on God’s offer of salvation/rescue.

**Jesus announces his intention to go somewhere. It sounds a bit cryptic! Where do you think he is planning to go?**

There are hints in the passage that Jesus is going to return to his Father in heaven after being lifted up – a reference to the crucifixion. You can point these out if no one notices them.

**Why can’t the Pharisees go with him?**

Only people who believe in Jesus can follow him to heaven, and the Pharisees do not believe he is who he claims to be.

#### INFO BOX: Sin

The heart of sin is deep unbelief that God is who he says he is and a similar refusal to accept that he is good. Sin is not simply wrong actions and attitudes but a defiance of God’s ways in place of our own (making us ‘god’). God created us to be in relationship with him, and at a fundamental level that relationship has been ruptured beyond repair by our sin. As humans, we are not simply born into a sinful world, but born as sinful creatures. The penalty for sin is death, judgement and eternal separation from God. Sin cannot be overcome by human effort and there is only one way to escape the penalty. The Bible is the story of God lovingly doing what we could never do, by taking on the penalty for our sin in the death of his son, Jesus (John 3:16) to make it possible to restore our relationship with him. Now, because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, we can enjoy the freedom of a restored relationship with God.

**What is the significance of the phrase “die in your sin”?**

If our sin is not dealt with – forgiven, by God – before we die, then our sins are still counted against us. We have only our limited lifetime to respond to God’s offer of walking in the light, and if we choose not to walk in the light, our sin remains counted against us.

**The Pharisees don't believe that Jesus is who he says he is, but Jesus points to a time when they will know that he was telling the truth. When is that?**

Jesus refers to that day by saying "when you have lifted up the Son of Man" – a reference to his coming crucifixion. It is enough to flag that even now Jesus knows what is coming and does not shy away from it. We will talk more about this in coming sessions.



**Read: John 8:31-38**

**Jesus promises two things for those who believe in him. What are those things and what is the relationship between them?**

Jesus promises that knowing the truth (found in Jesus' word) would lead to freedom. In the following verses Jesus makes clear that it is freedom from sin and condemnation and ultimately, death. The hallmark of a true disciple (follower of Jesus) is ongoing obedience to the teachings of Jesus.

**In what way do the Jews object? Does their objection seem reasonable to you?**

Facilitate a discussion around the idea of slavery. Be prepared to delineate between modern slavery (human trafficking, sweatshops etc) and the spiritual slavery on display in this passage. Humans are unable to release themselves from slavery to sin – we cannot stop sinning, even if we try really hard! That can only be done by Jesus, the Son who is able to set us free.

**How can we be set free from sin?**

Let the group toss this idea around, assess their levels of acceptance of this idea. If you need to guide the discussion, point people to the role of faith and trust in Jesus in being set free from sin.

## WRAP UP

**What have you learned about Jesus this week?**

Let participants throw around what they have taken away from this study. Try to use this time to sum up the big lesson this week: Jesus is the light of the world who brings life and freedom to those who believe in him.

**What questions do you have about what we've read this week?**

We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.

## PRAY TO CLOSE

**You might pray:**

- Thanking God that Jesus is trustworthy and came to set us free from sin
- Asking for help to understand the Bible
- For each group member to know Jesus

Don't expect all or any participants to pray – perhaps just say that you will pray, and people can join in and/or say Amen at the end, or they can just listen.





# JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

**John 6:1-70**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would observe Jesus' power displayed at the feeding of the 5000 and understand that miracles are mere symbols of greater spiritual realities.
- Participants would see that Jesus is the bread of life who offers eternal life and satisfaction to those who believe in him.

## PRAY

It's always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Don't expect all or any participants to pray – perhaps just say that you will pray to begin and explain that prayer is just talking to God and people can join in and say Amen (I agree) at the end, or they can just listen.

## READ

**Read: John 6:1-70**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 8:12-36**

You might like to prepare to read this section out to the group being sure to emphasise the incredulity of the disciples.

What do you notice?

How would you have felt if you were:

- Part of the crowd?
- One of the disciples?

Encourage the group to put themselves in the shoes of the disciples upon hearing that Jesus wanted to feed the great crowd, and also the shoes of the crowd upon receiving a great feast miraculously generated from five loaves of bread and two small fish.

What do we learn about Jesus' abilities?

He can do things that we can't. He has power over creation in a way that we don't.

Do you think it would be easier to believe in Jesus if you saw something miraculous like that?

Be ready for people to say that they would find it easier. Interestingly, there were plenty of people who saw the things Jesus did and still didn't believe. We will see in the coming verses that Jesus himself explodes expectations of miracles in favour of something more permanent.

**Read: John 6:22-24**



Why do you think the people are so keen to find Jesus?

Again, this is a great moment to be in the shoes of those crowds. Jesus was doing some pretty amazing things! They might have been curious, challenged, or even fearful.

**Read: John 6:25-40**



What does Jesus say about their motivation for finding him?

They have not even recognised that the feast they participated in was a miraculous sign, but simply see Jesus as the one who provides feasts.



### Read: John 8:13-20

Jesus makes a comparison between two types of food here. What are they and how are they described?

- Food that spoils (physical food), and
- Food that endures to eternal life (spiritual food).

Jesus tells them to look past their hungry bellies and instead work for the “food that endures to eternal life.” What kind of work produces food that endures to eternal life?

Believe in the one God has sent.

That is, believe that Jesus is who he claims to be (v29).

#### INFO BOX: Signs & Manna

The crowd wanted a sign to confirm that Jesus is who he claims to be (apparently forgetting the miraculous feast in which they just partook). And they remind Jesus about the miraculous feeding of the early Israelites in the desert (Ex 16). But Jesus corrects them by showing them that both miraculous feedings were pointing to an ultimate and eternally fulfilling gift—the true bread from heaven: Jesus.

What do you think Jesus means when he announces himself as the bread of life?

Facilitate a discussion around the idea of sustenance and the difference between the sustenance we receive from a loaf of bread from the shops and the sustenance we receive from Jesus. Help the group focus on 6:35 to help them reflect on the idea of eternal satisfaction instead of temporary satisfaction.

Where has Jesus come from? Why?

Jesus has come down from heaven, to give life to the world, and to hold on to those who believe in him forever and raise them up on the last day.

What is the promise given for those who take hold of the bread of life?

Eternal life and resurrection on the last day. Be sure to encourage the group with this thought, that those who believe in Jesus have confidence that they will live eternally with him.

### Read: John 6:41-70



Why do the Jews grumble about Jesus?

They don't like that he is claiming to have come down from heaven. They knew him as the son of a local carpenter!

Jesus gets specific about how to take hold of the living bread. What does he say?

You have to eat it! Jesus says he is the living bread that has come down from heaven, and you have to eat the bread. Eat the flesh of Jesus and drink his blood! Make sure you leave room for people to say that this sounds really weird.

Is he being literal or metaphorical?


It's a metaphor, but it's a shocking one!

How do we feed on Jesus?

By faith. Jesus takes the image of eating and drinking and makes himself the food. Jesus' shocking metaphor leaves the question, how?! And in this way, he points to believing in him (faith) as the way we feed on Jesus.

When we feed on Jesus, what benefits do we receive?

Life, eternal life, the certain hope of resurrection.



Even those who had said they believed in Jesus found his teachings hard to accept (v60) and some even decided they didn't want to follow Jesus after hearing him speak (v66), but there were others who acknowledged Jesus for who he is. What is the response of Simon Peter to the words of Jesus? Do you agree with him?

## WRAP UP

**What have you learned about Jesus this week?**

Let participants throw around what they have taken away from this study. Try to use this time to sum up the big lesson this week: Jesus is the bread of life who offers eternal life and satisfaction to those who believe in him.

**What questions do you have about what we've read this week?**

We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.

**Spend a minute by yourself thinking about whether you believe that Jesus is who he claims to be. Write down your thoughts in the space below.**

- I believe Jesus is...
- I am not sure about...

## PRAY TO CLOSE

**You might pray:**

- Thanking God that Jesus offers satisfaction and eternal life to those who believe in him
- Asking for help to understand the Bible
- For each group member to know Jesus

Don't expect all or any participants to pray.



# JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

**John 10:1-42**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would understand that Jesus is the good shepherd who cares deeply for those who follow him.
- Participants would think deeply about how they want to respond to Jesus.

## PRAY

It's always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Pray to begin and invite people to say a short prayer if they want to. Make sure people know they can just listen in if they want.

## READ

**Read: John 10:1-42**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

This section follows on directly from a conversation Jesus has been having with the Pharisees after he miraculously restored the sight of a man who had been blind since birth (John 9).

In his conversation with the Pharisees Jesus explains what it means to be spiritually blind and challenges the Pharisees to open their eyes and see Jesus for who he really is.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 10:1-30**

### Who are the sheep?

Those who follow Jesus.

### Who is the shepherd?

Jesus.

### Jesus presents himself as the 'good shepherd'. What does this title involve?

- He calls the sheep by name
- He leads the sheep
- Giving abundant life to the sheep (eternal life)
- Lay down his life for the sheep
- He knows the sheep

### How do the sheep respond to the shepherd?

- They know his voice
- They follow him
- They listen to him
- They know the shepherd
- They trust the shepherd

### INFO BOX: Sheep and the Bible

Jesus presents himself as the light of the world during the Feast of Sheep and shepherds are themes found all the way through the Bible. It is a metaphor that God uses to speak of his people (the sheep) and himself (the shepherd). Those rulers of Israel (kings, priests, judges) were also called shepherds, but they were always a pale reflection of the true shepherd, God. Jesus' claim to be the 'good shepherd' is another claim to be God!





**Jesus points to his coming death and resurrection as something significant in the shepherd/sheep relationship. What is he saying?**

Lead the group in a discussion around the idea of why a shepherd would be willing to die (lay down his own life) for the sheep. How would this make the sheep feel? How would they feel towards the shepherd who was willing to do this? The idea is that the lives of the sheep are safe and secure if they are with a shepherd like this. This shepherd will lay down his life to secure the safety of the flock and their eternal life.

**How do you feel knowing that you can have a good shepherd who knows you and lays down his life for you?**

Christians are the sheep in this picture. Help the group reflect on how they would feel to be following a leader who would do this for them.

**How do the Pharisees respond to what Jesus is saying?**



**Read: John 10:22-42**

For many years now the Jews have been waiting for God’s Messiah to arrive. This coming king had been prophesied about and promised by God as the one who would rule for eternity. The whole of the Old Testament begs the question, who on earth could be this Messiah? Jesus is God’s Messiah and has claimed to be so ever since arriving on the scene, but the Jewish religious leaders are sceptical because Jesus doesn’t act in a way that they believe the king of the Jews should act. In other words, they withheld their belief because Jesus didn’t conform to their expectations.

The Jews ask Jesus for a straight answer about whether or not he’s God’s promised Messiah.

**What does Jesus say?**

Get the group to imagine what it must be like for Jesus to keep telling them who he is and for them to keep disbelieving him.

**How do the Pharisees react to Jesus’ claim to be one with the Father?**

They want to stone him to death.

## WRAP UP

**Chapter 10 highlights a number of different ways people respond to Jesus. Fill in the following table:**

| Reference      | How People Respond to Jesus |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| John 10:20     |                             |
| John 10:21     |                             |
| John 10:31, 39 |                             |
| John 10:40-42  |                             |

**Which, if any, of those groups would you put yourself in?**

**What questions do you have about what we’ve read this week?**

We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.



## PRAY TO CLOSE

### You might pray:

- Thanking God that Jesus goes to extravagant lengths to secure the eternal safety of those who follow him.
- Asking for help to understand the Bible
- For each group member to know Jesus

Don't expect all or any participants to pray.



# JESUS IS THE TRUE VINE

**John 15:1-25**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would recognise Jesus as the source of life and the one who looks after us and cares for our earthly and spiritual needs.
- Participants would understand the costs of following Jesus.

## PRAY

It's always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Pray to begin and invite people to say a short prayer if they want to. Make sure people know they can just listen in if they want.

## READ

**Read: John 15:1-25**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

In the days before his death and resurrection, Jesus spends some time encouraging the disciples that he will continue to look after them after he returns to the Father (in heaven). In light of his ongoing care, he now tells the disciples that they need to be obedient to all the teachings he has given them.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 15:1-17**

Jesus again speaks to his disciples and this time uses the metaphor of a vine to describe the relationship he has with those who follow him.

**Who is the vine?**

Jesus

**Who are the branches?**

The disciples

**Who is the gardener?**

God/The Father

**What is the “fruit” that Jesus insists must be borne by his followers?**

Lead a discussion focused around this passage exploring what the fruit might be. Verses 8-12 are significant. If we love like Jesus, we will be bearing fruit and glorifying God.

**What is the central command Jesus gives?**

Love one another as I have loved you.

**What is Jesus referring to when he talks about laying down one's life?**

It is his death and resurrection – but it's more than that. Help the group to reflect on what it might mean to love like Jesus in their daily lives.

**How does the love Jesus talks about differ from modern ways of thinking about love?**

Ask the group to share what they think love should look like, and then guide the group in a discussion of the differences between a self-focused approach to love (“I love who I am with you” or “I love what you do for me”) and a Jesus-shaped approach to love. The message we receive from the world is to seek what is best for us, while Jesus tells us to seek the good of others first.

**How do you respond to Jesus' words that "you are my friends if you do what I command"?**

This is a hard teaching. Leave room for people to say they find it hard and strange, even possibly manipulative. Rather than correcting them, try to sit with the awkwardness, and point them back to the passage to read the surrounding context.

**Why is it important that Jesus' followers obey his teachings?**

To bring glory to God  
To be true disciples  
To have true and complete joy  
So that God will grant their requests



**Read: John 15:18-25**

**When we become Christians, we publicly declare that we no longer belong to the world and its dark way of doing things, but rather we belong to Christ and walk in the light of life he offers.**

**What does Jesus say will be the consequence of this change of allegiance?**

The world will hate and persecute you because they hated and persecuted Jesus.

**If this is the cost, why would anyone decide to follow Jesus?**

Facilitate a discussion on the real costs of being a follower of Jesus but remember to bring in all that we have learnt from the last five weeks. Jesus is the source of light and life, the only way to a restored relationship with God, the one who cares for us in our need and the one who promises to always care for us.

## WRAP UP

**What questions do you have about what we've read this week?**

**We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.**

**Spend a minute by yourself thinking about whether you believe that Jesus is who he claims to be. Write down your thoughts in the space below.**

- I believe Jesus is...
- I am not sure about...

## PRAY TO CLOSE

**You might pray:**

- Thanking God that he has made it possible for us to be included in his family.
- Asking for help to love others like Jesus has loved us.





# JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

**John 11:1-44**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would believe that there is life after death.
- Participants would know how to take hold of God’s promise of eternal life.

## PRAY

It’s always good to start with prayer for wisdom and insight as you read the Bible. Don’t expect all or any participants to pray.

## READ

**Read: John 11:1-44**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 15:1-17**

**What is this story about?**

Jesus appears to say two contradictory things about Lazarus’ sickness in verse 4 and verses 11-14.

**What are they?**

Jesus appears to say that Lazarus will not die, but then proceeds to say he has died.

**What do you think he is talking about?**

Jesus has two timelines in mind – the earthly timeline where the body wears out and dies, and the spiritual timeline where those who believe in Jesus will never truly die because they will live eternally with God in heaven.

**Do you think Jesus will be able to wake Lazarus from his “sleep”?**

Let the group share their thoughts on this. Resist the temptation to hint at what is coming.

**What is the point of Lazarus’ sickness?**

It will give God glory because it shows the power Jesus has over death.

**Read: John 11:17-37**



By the time Jesus arrives in Bethany Lazarus has been dead for four days, but both his sisters say the same thing to Jesus.

**What does what they say tell you about who they think Jesus is?**

They say, “Lord if you had been here, our brother would not have died.” So, they believe that somehow Jesus could have stopped their brother from dying by healing his illness. They believe he has some kind of power over sickness that they do not have.

**Jesus announces himself as the resurrection and the life. What does he mean?**

Help the group logically work through verses 21-27. By the end they should understand that Jesus is the access point for life beyond the grave. If we trust in him, we too shall live beyond death for all eternity.

### Are you interested in a future where you never die?

Be prepared for people to think of this as dull, or even painful if they have experienced a difficult or traumatic life. Gently paint the picture of this eternal future as one where there is no pain, suffering, or evil; but rather a safe, joyful, fulfilling, and loving eternity with God.

### How can you access eternal life?

By trusting in Jesus.

### Do you believe this?

This is the question Jesus asks Martha in our passage, and it is a question for all of us to answer. Leave room for people to say that they don't believe it. If appropriate you might want to gently ask why not or what they would need in order to believe.

**Did you notice that Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus? It is right and normal for us to be sad about death. It is one thing that we can have certainty about in this life – we will die, and Jesus is the only one who has any power to change that.**



**Read: John 11:38-44**

**When Jesus reaches Lazarus' tomb, he asks for the stone to be moved. Martha helpfully points out that it will be stinky because there's been a dead body inside for a few days, but Jesus insists.**

### What happens to Lazarus?

He is brought back to life.

### What does this tell you about Jesus?

He has power over death. He speaks and people come back to life.

### What will happen to Lazarus now?

Eventually he will die again and wait for the final resurrection.

## WRAP UP

### What questions do you have about what we've read this week?

**We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.**

**Do you believe Jesus is the resurrection and the life? If you are comfortable, share your answer with the group.**

**Don't pressure people to share their answers.**

## PRAY TO CLOSE

### You might pray:

- Thanking God for the gift of life found in Jesus.
- For each member of the group to grow in their knowledge of God.
- Thanking God for those who have said they want to follow Jesus.



# THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS

## John 19-20

### Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would interact with the story of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- Participants would see and understand that Jesus' death and resurrection has implications for them and be encouraged to believe in Jesus.

### PRAY

Ask if someone in the group would like to pray to start your time together. Try and reduce the awkwardness as much as possible, and if no one volunteers, do it yourself.

### READ

**Read: John 19-20**

We're going to do something a little different this session. Before the group gathers, prepare a dramatic reading of John 19-20 (with pauses and emphasis in the right places).

**NOTE: This will take some preparation!**

The idea is to help people feel like they are in the crowd hearing Jesus be sentenced to death, witnessing his crucifixion, and sharing the excitement and shock at his resurrection.

### REFLECT + RESPOND

**What do you notice?**

**How does it make you feel?**

In the table below you'll find a list of the key players in this account of the death and resurrection of Jesus. What is the attitude of each person towards Jesus?

| PERSON                     | ATTITUDE TO JESUS |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Pilate                     |                   |
| Soldiers                   |                   |
| Chief priests and officers |                   |
| Jews                       |                   |
| Women at the cross         |                   |
| Joseph of Arimathea        |                   |
| Mary Magdalene             |                   |
| Simon Peter                |                   |
| Thomas                     |                   |

**What reasons does Pilate give for having Jesus crucified? Do you think his reasons are good?**

Even though he finds no basis for conviction, Pilate still sentences Jesus to death, because the Jewish leaders made him think that by setting him free he would be opposing the powerful rule of Caesar. He sends Jesus to his death out of fear of the crowd and fear of Caesar.

**How is Jesus treated, and how does he respond? What does this tell you about who he is?**

Help the group think about the ways Jesus was treated and how his response is different to what you might expect. He doesn't complain like many of us would, but instead accepts his suffering.

**In the moments before his death, Jesus says, "It is finished" – what is he referring to?**

Jesus is claiming to have completed the task for which he was sent. At the moment of his death, God's anger at all sin was poured on to Jesus. His death is a declaration that sin is dealt with and the path to God open for all who choose to trust in the death of Jesus as the means to a reconciled relationship with God. It will be his resurrection that marks his supremacy over death (see Study 6 – "I am the resurrection and the life"), but it is his death that ultimately takes care of our sin problem. There is nothing more to be done in order for us to be saved. The ball is now in our court, as it were.

**What details about Jesus' resurrection are we given in John 20?**

**Last week we saw that Jesus claimed to be the resurrection and the life. Does that claim have greater significance in light of what you've read this week?**

Lead a discussion around the significance of the now-resurrected Jesus saying he was the resurrection and the life. Does it add depth to the story of Lazarus from last week?

**Who in this story are you most like?**

**Who in this story are you most like?**

**Would it be easier to believe in Jesus if you could see him?**

Leave room for people to say that they would find it easier to believe if they could be like Thomas, but also gently point people to Jesus' words in 20:29 about believing and not seeing.

## WRAP UP

**What questions do you have about what we've read this week?**

We encourage you to keep a list of the questions people have so you can help answer them as appropriate. If any of the questions from last week have been answered, feel free to cross them off.

**Spend a minute by yourself thinking about whether you believe that Jesus died and rose to life again. If you are comfortable, share your answer with the group.**

**Don't pressure people to share their answers.**

## PRAY TO CLOSE

**You might pray:**

- Thanking God that Jesus died on the cross, taking upon himself the punishment for the sins of everyone in the world.
- Praising God that Jesus' resurrection shows he has power over death.





# JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

**John 14:1-31**

## Lesson Outcomes:

- Participants would know that the only way to have a restored relationship with God and eternal life is through trusting in Jesus.
- Participants would think deeply about whether they want to trust in Jesus and be Christians.

## PRAY

Lead the group in prayer, thanking God for the time you have had together and asking for God's help to trust him.

## READ

**Read: John 14:1-31**

Start by reading the whole passage for today, you may want to ask if anyone wants to read out loud for the group.

## REFLECT + RESPOND



**Read: John 14:1-4**

We rewind a little now to back before Jesus was killed and resurrected.

In the days before Jesus is sentenced to death, he spends some time alone with the disciples, teaching them how to keep trusting in him after his death and resurrection and preparing them for his imminent return to the Father in heaven.

Jesus announces he is going away but he tells the disciples to “not let their hearts be troubled.” Where is he going and what will he be doing while he's there?

Jesus is returning to heaven to prepare the rooms for all those who trust in him – if we trust in Jesus we will live forever with him in heaven.

How is Jesus' message to his disciples different to what he said to the Pharisees who did not believe him back in Study 2? (see John 8:21-30)

Why is believing in God and Jesus the way to calm the disciples' fears about Jesus leaving?

What do you think it looks like to believe in God and believe in Jesus?

**Read: John 14:5-24**



What is Thomas' reaction?

I don't know the way to where you're going!

How does Jesus respond to Thomas?

I am the way.

Jesus equates knowing him with knowing God. Think back to all we have learnt over the last eight sessions – why do you think Jesus can say that?

Facilitate a discussion around the identity of Jesus that we have learnt about in previous sessions. Jesus is the light of the world, the bread of life, the good shepherd, the true vine and the resurrection and the life.

### What is the relationship between Jesus and the Father? What difference does it make to how we approach Jesus?

He is in the Father and the Father is in him. In Jesus we truly see the character of God, so we can know he is not a distant supreme being, but someone who wants to know us, who loves us and who cares for us.

### What proof does Jesus offer to validate his claim to be one with the Father?

He offers his own testimony, but also, he points to all the works he has done – the healings and miracles he performed. Think back to when he raised Lazarus from the dead as an example.

### What will Jesus do for those who love him and keep his commands?

- He will send the Spirit to help them and be with them forever
- They will live, because Jesus lives beyond the grave
- The Father will love them

### Jesus makes a strong connection between loving him and obeying his teaching. Why do you think obedience matters?

Obedience to Jesus shows that we recognise he is who he says he is, that we follow him and think his way is the best way of living in the world.



Read John 14:25-31

### Jesus promises that he will not leave the disciples alone in the world. Who will be around to help them after Jesus' departure?

The Holy Spirit

### What will the Holy Spirit do?

Teach them everything and remind them of everything Jesus taught.

### Jesus tells the disciples that he is going away (he knows that in the next few days he will be crucified). Why does he tell them such distressing news?

So that when they see it happen, they will believe that Jesus is who he claims to be and that is not a plan gone wrong, but very much part of God's plan.

## WRAP UP

Believing in Jesus and trusting in his ability to deliver you to the Father is the endgame of the Christian life. Christians are people who first and foremost receive the love of God demonstrated in Jesus, and then seek to obey the teachings of Jesus in all areas of their lives.



## WILL YOU FOLLOW JESUS?

Being a Christian is about three big things:

1. Acknowledging to God that you have followed your own ways rather than the ways of God. In this state you cannot have the relationship with God that you were designed for. There is nothing you can do to undo the effects of your sin.
2. Believing that Jesus, God's perfect son, died on the cross to take the punishment for your sin, and actively trusting in his death as the means to forgiveness and a restored relationship with God who gives you true and lasting freedom, satisfaction, security and safety.
3. Putting your trust into action by following God's ways revealed to us in the Bible.

If you believe that Jesus is who he says he is and you want to put your trust in him today, you can pray the prayer below and have confidence that God hears and forgives you, and welcomes you into the family of believers.



## PRAY TO CLOSE

Loving Heavenly Father,

I am sorry that I have lived my own way instead of your way.

Please forgive me.

I believe Jesus' death paid the penalty for my sin.

I put my trust in him.

Thank you that because of his death,  
I can have a restored relationship with you.

Please help me trust you each day and  
live in obedience to you and the teachings of Jesus.

Amen.

## IGNITION GLOSSARY OF BIBLE WORDS

**Advocate:** This legal term is one way the Holy Spirit is described in John's Gospel. The Advocate (Holy Spirit) vouches for the believer before God and also guides the believer to continually put their trust in Jesus.

**Blasphemy:** Speaking evil of God. The heart of this is calling God's works evil.

**Caesar:** The title assumed by rulers of the Roman Empire during the time of Jesus.

**Christ:** A title given to Jesus meaning 'anointed'. For Jesus to be called the Christ is to say that he is culmination of all Old Testament prophecy that God would fulfil his redemptive plan through a Messiah of his choosing. God had specifically chosen him to be the leader of his people.

**Disciple:** A follower of Jesus.

**Elijah:** A prophet (messenger of God) in the Old Testament.

**Gentile:** Any person not descended from Abraham.

**Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity (the Christian godhead is perfectly one, and also three persons: the Father, the Son, the Spirit).

He is unseen but present in the lives of believers, prompting them to put their trust in Jesus and obey the commands of God.

**Jews:** A group of people descended from the Biblical nation of Israel. Their cultural identity is found in the religion of Judaism.

**Lamb of God:** A title of Jesus. It refers to the sacrificial system in the Old Testament where an unblemished lamb was sacrificed on the altar as purification for sin. The sacrifice of one lamb represented the cleansing of one person.

Jesus as the Lamb of God can stand in our place and take the punishment our sin deserves (death), and as God, his sacrifice is unlimited in its efficacy for all humans.

**Levites:** In the Old Testament, the Levites were one of the tribes of Israel specially selected to fulfil the priestly duties.

**Messiah (see Christ)**

**Passover:** A festival for the Jewish people in remembrance of the Exodus event in Exodus 12 where God spared them from his judgement on their oppressors (Egypt) and the subsequent rescue from slavery.

**Pharisees:** The religious leaders of Jesus' day characterised by strict observance of the law.

**Pilate:** The governor of Judea.

**Prophet:** A messenger of God.

**Rabbi:** The Jewish word for 'teacher'.

**Sin:** The heart of sin is deep unbelief that God is who he says he is and a similar refusal to accept that he is good. Sin is not simply wrong actions and attitudes but a defiance of God's ways in place of our own (making us 'god').

God created us to be in relationship with him, and at a fundamental level that relationship has been ruptured beyond repair by our sin.