

Session 51

A walk with friends

In this session we explore a part of the Easter story that our 5 to 8s may be less familiar with. As Jesus reveals himself to his friends, our 5 to 8s can also discover more about who Jesus is and why he came.

To plan your session... Choose a selection of *Opening*, *Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

Options to open your session...

Worship

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to praise Jesus because he is alive

- 1 As a group together, choose some songs about Jesus coming back to life again.
- 2 Ask the children what they think we celebrate at Easter. You could make a list if they come up with lots of ideas. Encourage them to use their suggestions to form simple praise prayers, such as 'Thank you, God, for chocolate'.
- 3 Sing the songs you have chosen to celebrate Jesus being alive again.

Clues game

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to use clues to recognise people

You will need: pictures of people the children will know

- 1 Cover each picture with several sticky notes.
- 2 Ask the children to take it in turns to guess who the picture is of. When they have made their guess, allow them to remove one of the sticky notes to reveal part of the picture. Continue until they guess correctly. Repeat this for each picture.
- 3 Say that when they look at today's Bible passage, they are going to try to find clues about who Jesus is and why he came to earth.

More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

Session 50 A welcome and a meal, Luke 19:28–40; 22:7–23

Session 52 A world to change, Luke 24:36–49

Aim

To explore the clues Jesus gives about the meaning of his life (part 2)

Bible passage

Luke 24:1–35

Ready to use activity

Running game

Activity time: 5 minutes

Aim: to understand how different jobs have different meanings

- 1 Make signs for: policeman, teacher, builder, nurse, Jesus. Stick the signs up round your room.
- 2 Call out the explanations of what people do, and challenge the children to run and stand under the appropriate sign. Do not use the 'Jesus' sign yet:
changes a bandage/dressing (*nurse*)
tells you stories (*teacher*)
catches criminals (*policeman*)
builds a wall (*builder*)
checks your maths (*teacher*)
takes your blood pressure (*nurse*)
paints a house (*builder*)
gives you homework (*teacher*)
stops people speeding (*policeman*)
syringes your ears to remove wax (*nurse*)
- 3 At the end, stand by the 'Jesus' sign and, as each child joins you, ask them to tell you one thing Jesus does. You could start your story from here.

Into the Bible - options to explore the Bible passage...

Ready to use
activity

Bible story using *Splash!*

Activity time: 20 minutes

Aim: to explore the clues Jesus gives about the meaning of his life

You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheet from page 360

1 Chat

Ask the children if they have ever known someone who had to go away. For example, one of their parents might go away on business, a friend might move house or a grandparent may die. Ask them how they feel when they hear the news – does it make a difference if they know the person will come back again?

2 *Splash!*

Tell the children that Jesus had gone away and left his friends. They had seen him arrested and then killed in a cruel way on the cross. Ask someone to find the picture on the *Bible Timeline*. How do they think those friends felt?

Ask the children to look at the *Splash!* sheet from page 360 and explain that you are going to use the pictures to tell the story, with the children drawing the appropriate faces. Have a Bible open at Luke 24.

Look at picture 1 together and read Luke 24:1. Invite the children to draw sad faces on the women. Ask the children what they think the angels are saying (picture 2) and then read verses 4b, 5 and 6. Encourage the children to draw scared faces. Say that the women went and told Jesus' other friends what had happened. Read verses 10b and 11 and ask the children to draw disbelieving faces on the disciples (picture 3). (The children may need to practise this by pulling 'unbelieving' faces and then drawing something similar on the disciples.) Ask if the children can guess which disciple ran to the tomb (picture 4). Read verse 12 and invite the children to draw a confused face on Peter.

Next, tell how, later that day, two friends were heading home to Emmaus. Read verse 13 and say that they still didn't understand that Jesus was alive, so they had sad faces (the children can draw these in picture 5). Ask the children if they can guess who started walking along with them. Read verses 14 and 15, and identify Jesus as the man talking to the two friends (picture 6). Read verses 28–31 and ask how the friends felt once they recognised Jesus. Encourage the children to draw happy and excited faces on picture 7. Ask the group why they think the two men are running back to Jerusalem (picture 8) and read verses 33 and 35 to confirm this.

3 Respond

If you don't have time for any of the *Living the life* activities, ask the children how they feel when they hear about Jesus' resurrection and use those thoughts for prayer. It may also be appropriate to pray for any of the children in your group who are mourning someone such as a grandparent, asking Jesus to be with them.

You will find another
Into the Bible option
on the next page...

Into the Bible - options (continued)...

Walking the Bible story

Activity time: 25 minutes

Aim: to explore clues about Jesus' life

You will need: footprints and sentences from page 361

1 Prepare

Make 12 pairs of the footprints from page 361 and number them 1 to 12. Write one of the sentences on the back of each sheet.

Put the footprints on the floor, text side down, to make an interesting trail for the children to follow. You can include additional footprints (with nothing on the back) to make the trail go further. Put the footprints with sentence 12 back at the beginning of the trail – so that, at the appropriate time, the children can run back from Emmaus to Jerusalem.

2 Recap

If you have done Session 50, ask the children if they remember the stories about Jesus riding on a donkey into Jerusalem and the Passover meal. Otherwise, give a brief summary, then ask whether anyone knows what happened next (*Jesus died on the cross*). Say that, today, they are going to follow some clues to find out what happened after Jesus died.

3 Walk the story

Show the children the first set of footprints and ask someone to read the sentence on the back. Ask how the women might have been feeling on the way to the tomb. Challenge the children to walk with you in a sad and tired way (perhaps crying or wailing) to the next set of footprints. Read the next sentence. Again, ask how the women might have been feeling (scared, shocked) and walk on together showing those emotions. Continue in the same way until number 11, then run back to 'Jerusalem' for sentence 12.

4 Chat

Discuss the three episodes that make up this story and the 'clues' the characters were given about Jesus. For example:

The women: they saw the stone had been rolled away; saw that the body had gone; saw two angels; the angels told them Jesus was alive; they remembered Jesus' words.

Peter: heard what the women said; saw the stone had been rolled away; saw that the body had gone; Jesus appeared to him.

Cleopas and his friend: had the Scriptures explained to them so they understood that Jesus would die and come back to life again; saw Jesus break the bread. (Did they see the nail marks? Did they recognise his mannerisms?)

5 Take it further

If you want to do the 'Bible search' from *Living the life*, this might be a good time to include it. Afterwards talk about how God sent Jesus to die so that we can be forgiven and live with him in heaven (see 'Chat and pray' in *Living the life*).

Tip for Leaders: It is important to grow good relationships with the children in our groups, to call them by name, remember their favourite football team, be prepared to chat with them and listen to them.

Living the life - options to help live God's way...

Bible search

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to explore the clues the Bible gives about the meaning of Jesus' life

You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheet from page 362

- 1 Give out copies of the *Splash!* sheet from page 362.
- 2 Remind the group that, as Jesus and his friends walked to Emmaus, he explained how the Jewish Scriptures (in the Old Testament) explained the purpose of his life and death (even though his friends did not recognise him at the time).
- 3 Challenge the children to look up the verses and then link each one with the appropriate picture. You may want to mark the verses in a Bible before the session to save time: Isaiah 7:14 (*baby in manger*), Isaiah 61:1 (*teaching and healing*), Zechariah 9:9 (*riding a donkey*), Psalm 41:9 (*Judas betraying Jesus*), Isaiah 53:4,5 (*being whipped and beaten*), Psalm 22:16-18 (*on the cross*), Isaiah 53:9 (*in a tomb*).

Reflective prayer

Activity time: 5 minutes

Aim: to think about the meaning of Jesus' life

You will need: *Light for Everyone* CD

- 1 Ask everyone to sit very still on the floor with space between them.
- 2 Explain that they are going to listen to a song and you would like everyone to close their eyes and imagine pictures of Jesus as the song plays. Play 'Who was the man?' from the SU *Light for Everyone* CD.
- 3 When the song has finished encourage everyone to continue to sit in silence so that they can pray to Jesus, either aloud or silently in their heads. Then play the song again.
- 4 If your children find it hard to concentrate, you might suggest they draw their own pictures of Jesus while they listen.

An MP3 for this activity is available in the zip folder.

Ready ^{to use} activity

Chat and pray

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to think about the meaning of Jesus' life and death

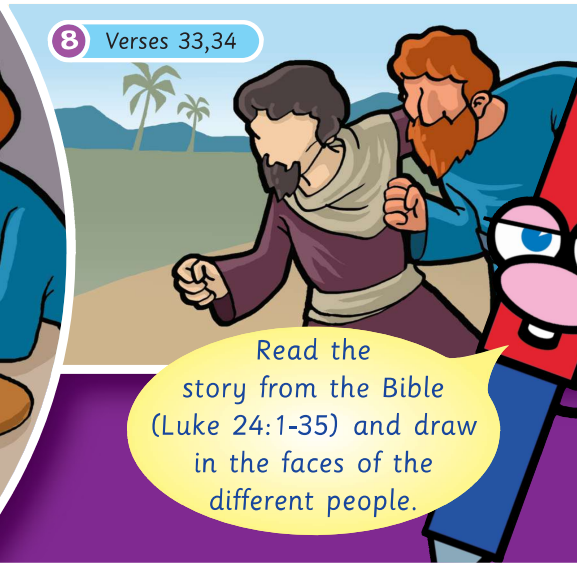
You will need: signs from page 363 (optional)

- 1 If possible, enlarge the signs from page 363, one per A4 sheet of paper; alternatively, quickly draw your own version of each sign on separate sheets of paper.
- 2 Use your signs – a heart, an 'X', a cross, a tick – to give a simple gospel presentation to the group. Try to draw responses from the children and write their ideas on the signs. The heart represents God's love for the world; the 'X' represents how people do wrong things; the cross stands for Jesus' death and resurrection, and the tick means that God will forgive those who are sorry.
- 3 Give every child a sticky note on which to write or draw a prayer, and invite them to stick it to one of the signs. A prayer on the heart might thank God for his love; one on the 'X' might be saying 'sorry' for something they have done wrong and so on.

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...

Make Easter gardens using soil in shallow trays, plants, rocks and pipe cleaner or peg figures.

Have copies of the SU booklet *The Biggest Surprise* available for children who want to think more about what the Easter story means to them.



Read the story from the Bible (Luke 24:1-35) and draw in the faces of the different people.

Walking the Bible story



1 Very early in the morning some women went to Jesus' tomb, carrying some perfume and spices that they wanted to put on Jesus' body.
2 When they arrived they found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. When they went inside the body had gone!
3 Suddenly two angels stood there and told them that Jesus had risen from the dead.
4 The women remembered that Jesus had told them this would happen. They went back and told Jesus' other friends what had happened, but they didn't believe them.
5 Peter ran back to the tomb and looked in and saw only Jesus' burial clothes and not his body. He wondered what had happened.
6 Later, Cleopas and his friend were feeling very sad as they walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, remembering how Jesus had died.
7 A stranger came and started walking with them. He didn't seem to know about Jesus.
8 They talked about how Jesus had died and also how some of the women had been to the tomb and found it empty. The stranger used the Scriptures (Bible) to explain what had happened to Jesus.
9 When Cleopas and his friend arrived at Emmaus the stranger was going to carry on with his journey, but Cleopas persuaded him to come in and have a meal with them.
10 They sat down to eat and the stranger took the bread, broke it and thanked God for the food. Suddenly they realised that the stranger was Jesus! And just as suddenly Jesus disappeared!
11 Straight away Cleopas and his friend ran all the way back to Jerusalem to tell the others what had happened.
12 When they got to Jerusalem and told their story, they heard that Jesus had also appeared to Peter.

Splash!



Jesus probably explained these verses to his friends when he met them on the road to Emmaus.

Link each verse with the right picture.



Isaiah
7:14



Isaiah
61:1



Zechariah
9:9



Psalms
41:9



Isaiah
53:4-5



Psalms
22:16-18



Isaiah
53:9

