

JESUS

A SERIES OF DISCOVERY

Leaders Guide

Prepared by Mark Carter



1 | The Story of the Bible

Summary:

This video presents the whole story of the Bible. It begins with the Creation and Eden and moves through the fall and Babylon. They show how Abraham becomes God's means of continuing his promise and follows through the history of Israel. They pick up in the New Testament with the life of Jesus and his teaching. They end with the crucifixion and resurrection. This video is good because it provides just enough details to understand the main characters, but is still short enough to hold it all in memory. The goal is that those who have little or no knowledge of Christianity will hear about Jesus in the greater context of God's plan of redemption right from the beginning. The Bible project creators are clear in saying they believe the whole bible tells the story of Jesus. Choose a few of following questions to clarify points and begin discussion around this video. Consider mentioning one or two questions as points for the group to be listening for e.g. "As you watch the video, pay attention to what the new family was supposed to do and how it went wrong."

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions:

1. What is the basic task of Humans?
2. What are the two ways people can carry out their task?
3. What are the two "terms" of ruling and carrying out the task?
4. What was the result of eating the apple?
5. What was the new family supposed to do?
6. What happened when the new family failed?
7. What is the promise at the end of the Old Testament?
8. What did Jesus say he would do regarding the promises?
9. What did Jesus say real power was?
10. Who did Jesus say he was?
11. What problems did people have who chose the "new way" of Jesus?
12. What did the leaders of Jesus' followers do to encourage all the followers?

Conclusion:

The overall story of the Bible is about hope. God made the world good and it became twisted so evil caused harm, but God has a plan to make things right and is carrying it out.

Consider asking the group what they find hopeful about what God is doing.

2 | Covenants

Read: Jeremiah 31: 27-33, Genesis 9:1-17, Exodus 19:1-6, Luke 22:14-23

Summary:

This video explains the meaning of covenants in the Bible. Covenants are like a partnership and God partners with humans in order to care for his creation. Humans break this partnership and this is sin. As a result, God then selects a smaller group (the people of Israel) to partner with them in continuing the process of building and blessing his creation and restoring it to its original goodness. But Israel also fails. The prophets of Israel said that God would make a new covenant in the future and a descendant from the line of King David would fulfill these covenants. Jesus is this descendant and he fulfills the covenants perfectly for Israel. Jesus is not just human though; he is God come down into humanity. So God fulfills the covenants as a human for humans in order to continue the partnership to bring blessing and wholeness to his creation.

Before showing the video, consider asking the group to be watching for how evil entered the world and what role Jesus played in covenants.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions:

1. What does the Bible say the main relationship with God is called?
2. What does the Bible say is the reason for why we are stuck in a world full of bad things?
3. What are the two parts of a covenant?
4. Covenants
 1. What are the terms of the first covenant?
 2. What does Abraham have to do? What will happen?
 3. What is the third covenant?
 4. What will one of David's sons do?
5. What is special about Jesus and the covenant?
6. What is special about how God reconnected with all people through Jesus?
7. How does the story end?

Conclusion:

This teaching shows in more detail the specific way God has chosen to relate to us. Consider closing with a reflection on how God came to earth to fulfill the part of covenant in which we could not keep. This shows the great love and mercy of God who recognizes our weakness and takes care of us in our greatest need.

3 | Messiah

Read: John 4:25-42, Acts 2:14-41

Summary:

In this video, we learn about the entrance of evil in the garden and God's promise that a deliverer would come who would suffer a wound but ultimately destroy his enemy. We then learn about the continued promise through Abraham, Judah, and David. There is fear that the king would not come when Israel was exiled, but the prophets continued to encourage the people that the messiah would come. In the New Testament, the gospel writers show Jesus as the one who would fulfill these Old Testament promises. Jesus teaches the people about God's plan and his kingdom and how he would be God's messiah. The people begin to believe in him but Jesus tells them he would defeat the enemy in a different way than they expect. Jesus eventually dies and it looked like the evil one had won. But Jesus rose from the grave and showed that he had overcome death and that his followers could overcome death through believing in him. He pointed to a future time when there would be no more sin and death and God's creation would be made right again. Before showing the video, ask the group to be watching for why a Messiah was needed and how the Messiah defeated death.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions:

1. Why was there a need for a Messiah?
2. What were the Jews expecting the messiah to be like?
3. How did the Messiah defeat death?

Conclusion:

The idea of the promise of a messiah and its fulfillment in Jesus is critical for new believers to understand. Be sure to stress the promise and fulfillment in Jesus. Consider asking the group what they picture a saviour being like (a knight who kills the dragon? etc.)

Consider concluding by asking the group what it means for them that God's messiah gave up his own life to overcome the enemy.

4 | The Gospel of the Kingdom

Read: Mark 1:9-15, Matt 7:13-28

Summary:

In this video, we learn about the the promise of a future kingdom and the doubt the Jews had when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. We learned about Isaiah’s prophecy of a messenger bringing “good news” that God still reigns and a king will come to rule once again. In the New Testament, we learn about the “good news” of Jesus, a king who came to overturn the expectations the people had for their Messiah. They expected war, but Jesus brought peace. They expected military victory and Jesus brought justice. He was the king who overcame by dying. It was the last thing anyone expected but the very thing that was needed.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions

1. What was meant by good news?
2. Why was good news used to describe the life and message of Jesus?
3. How was Jesus method of overcoming enemies different from the Romans?
4. How did Jesus become king of the Jews?
5. How did Jesus defeat death?
6. What do Christians do with the good news?

Conclusion:

The kingdom of God is a broad concept. It is like an overarching meaning behind Jesus life and teaching. The goal is for the people in the group to grasp the idea of “kingdom” not as something physical, but as God’s reality entering in and restoring the broken and hurting world as we know it.

5 | The Birth of Jesus (Luke 1-2)

Read: Luke 1-2

Summary

In this video, we learn about the background and circumstances leading up to the birth of Jesus. Luke, the author of this gospel, adds important details to instruct the readers about who Jesus is and why he is significant. He begins with the location, which is significant for prophecy. He draws in Zechariah and his wife conceiving in old age a child which would point the way for the coming king. Luke then moves to the story of Mary and her interaction with the angel. He points out the unusual circumstances of Mary and Joseph having to stay in a stable and then angels proclaim the birth of the Messiah to shepherds, the lowest class of people. Luke is pointing out that the birth of the Messiah is overturning expectations in an “upside down” coming of the king.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions

1. What is significant about the details Luke mentions leading up to the birth of Jesus?
2. What does Mary say the child will do in her song?
3. What does Luke 1-2 tell the story of?

Conclusion

This story begins the in-depth look at the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. It is worth taking time dwelling on the circumstances leading up to his birth. Luke adds important points to his account to show that Jesus is the Messiah. Taking time to reflect on this story and the key points the video draws out.

6 | Jesus' Ministry Begins (Luke 3-9)

Read: Luke 3:1-17, Luke 4:1-19, Luke 5:1-11

Summary:

In this video, we learn about Jesus baptism and the beginning of his ministry. We find that Jesus baptism has lots of symbolism for who he is and what he will accomplish. John was calling the people of Israel to return to their original commitment to God. Baptism was like re-enacting the crossing through the Jordan river into the promised land. Jesus was baptized to show how he would be the true Israelite. He then went into the desert to be tested by Satan just like Israel was when they wandered in the desert, but unlike Israel, Jesus did not grumble against God for his affliction, but resisted the devil and his temptations. We then learn that Jesus would help the poor and afflicted. His message was freedom and welcome the outcasts and strangers in the land into the Kingdom of God. He chose 12 disciples that were symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel and they were taken from various backgrounds that were not usually compatible, but in the Kingdom of God, walls are broken down through the love of God lived out in their lives. Finally, the transfiguration event showed that Jesus was about to accomplish his greatest work and establish himself as king of the Jews, but in an unexpected way.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions:

1. Why was John baptizing people? What change did it imply?
2. What was special about the words said of Jesus that came from heaven?
3. What group or type of people had Jesus come to help? Why?
4. What kinds of qualities does Jesus call his followers to have?

Conclusion:

This teaching on Jesus introduces important themes and aspects of Jesus' life and ministry. He came to fulfill and Luke shows us this in many ways. We should realize that Jesus did not come to fulfill the expectations of the Jews, but to do his Father's will. He did not come to be coddled by the rich and powerful, but to walk and talk with the poor and weak, with those who had no place or standing in their culture and society.

Jesus overturns our expectations as well. How does our contemporary society related to the time of Jesus and how does he overturn our expectations of God at work among us?

8 | The Final Week (Luke 19-23)

Read: Luke 19:19-46; 22:1-23; 23:1-49

Summary:

In this video, we learn about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem and how it symbolized the entry of the promised king to Jerusalem. Jesus knew he would be rejected and Israel would suffer, which made him weep, but also get angry. He went to the temple and overturned their tables and quoted judging passages from Jeremiah to those in the temple. Jesus did all of this at a key time in the Jewish year, which was passover. He used the symbols of passover to show what he would do and what it meant for God's people. The Jewish leaders hated him for disrupting their power and judging them and so they had him crucified by the Roman governor, Pilate. This video ends with Jesus dying on the cross. Israel had crucified her king.

After watching the video, use some of the following questions to prompt discussion of the important points.

Questions:

1. What was the significance of Jesus riding into Jerusalem?
2. What was the importance of Jesus timing during passover week?
3. Why did the Jews kill Jesus?

Conclusion:

This series has now come to the climax of the story of Jesus. Ask the people in the group how they feel about the Messianic king being crucified like a criminal. Does it seem right? Is it fair? Does it seem just? The story does not end here, but it can seem very dark at this point. How does this sense of darkness and foreboding mix with God, who is often portrayed as love (John 3:16)? Additionally, ask the group how they think the death of Jesus relates to the Old Testament since much of what Jesus did and said either fulfilled or related to the Old Testament.

9 | A New Day (Luke 24)

Read: Luke 24

Summary:

In this video, we receive a review of the key points about Jesus Luke has written and then how the story about two disappointed followers of Jesus walking along the road to Emmaus. They don't recognize Jesus after he was raised from the dead and Jesus explains how the scriptures actually described exactly what had happened to Jesus. They finally saw that it was Jesus talking with them when he broke bread and they ate it. Luke writes this as a way of explaining that it can be hard to see who Jesus is and we must "take him in" meaning believe and be empowered in order to understand. The book ends with Jesus saying they would receive power after he leaves and the disciples are waiting for this power to arrive in a room.

Questions:

1. What are the key points we have learned about Jesus in Luke so far?
2. Why was there confusion around the empty tomb and the claim that Jesus was raised from the dead?
3. What was Jesus explaining to the two travellers on the road to Emmaus?
4. Why did Jesus rise up into the sky?
5. What were the disciples waiting for in the upper room?

Conclusion:

This video brings us past the crucifixion and into the glorious resurrection. Jesus overcame death and accomplished his task as God incarnate. Jesus ascended into heaven, but he sent the Holy Spirit to empower his followers, which would cause the church to grow exponentially. The darkness of the crucifixion gave way to the radiant light of the resurrection. Ask the group How does Jesus' victory over death shape your understanding of life and death? Jesus promised that he would send a helper. We do not have Jesus with us in bodily form today, but we have God just the same in the form of the Holy Spirit. As a 21st century disciple of Christ, we continue in the footsteps of the first disciples and we have the Holy Spirit to empower us.

10 | Final Things

Read: Isaiah 53:10-12, Daniel 9:24-25, Matt. 20:20-28

Summary:

In this video, we learn that God created his world to be good and all people long for peace and justice. The problem is that something compels people to do things that disrupt peace and justice. This is called evil and it causes problems directly when someone steals from another, and indirectly because an unspoken law has been broken and distrust forms between two people. Evil has entered the world and it needs to be dealt with. All people have evil in them and so God cannot just get rid of all people. This is why we need to be “cleaned up” and the term for this is atonement. The Bible says a sacrifice must be made so that the guilt of evil is removed from the perpetrator. Atonement was made by priests killing an animal as a symbolic act and offering it to God. The indirect effect of evil was also dealt with through sacrifice by the blood of that animal symbolically being used to clean away the evil that was polluting the world. The goal is to remove evil from the creation and return human existence to right relationship with God where we could experience his love and grace. Animal sacrifice could never really accomplish that goal properly, so God came to earth as Jesus and he became that ultimate sacrifice that would make atonement for the evil we have in us and lead the way into his end goal of a new creation that would be free from evil.

Jesus died as a sacrifice for us and his blood purifies us from evil. He also rose from the grave and broke the power of evil so he lives on and offers his life to anyone who accepts him. The need for continual animal sacrifices ended at that point, but baptism and the Lord’s supper became two ways that people participate with Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection.

Questions:

1. What are the two ways evil effects us all?
2. What is God’s way of removing evil without us being punished?
3. What does animal blood represent?
4. What does sprinkling of blood do? What is the term for this?
5. Why had the sacrifices become meaningless for Israel?
6. How did Jesus death effect all people?
7. What is the term used for the effect evil has on the world? Why this term?
8. What are the new rituals Christians practice? What do they represent?

Conclusion:

This teaching brings everything we have learned to a climax. Jesus is the central figure of God’s story of creation and restoration. The death and resurrection of Jesus is God’s solution to evil in the world. Ask the people in the group how evil has troubled them and compare how non-religious people deal with evil to how God deals with evil. Is there a difference? What happens if we focus on fixing suffering in the world without dealing with the source of that suffering? How does hope fit into this framework?