

**Session 1: 'Where are you?'**

1-8 JAN

**ICEBREAKERS**

What did you most enjoy over Christmas?  
What New Year resolutions did you make and where are you with them?

**KEY THOUGHT**

We often ask questions of God, but fail to realise He also asks questions of us. To hear and respond to God's questions takes great courage, but will ultimately lead us to greater trust and intimacy with Him.

**KEY VERSE**

'Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said: "... I will question you, and you shall answer me.'" Job 38:1,3

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Why would God confront us with difficult questions?
2. What motivates us to ask questions?
3. How may questions ennoble and enrich us?
4. Why should we not fret if our questions remain unanswered?
5. Discuss St Augustine's question and how it may relate to your own life.
6. Why may we wrongly see God's questions as accusations?
7. 'Where are you?'
8. Why is the soul's proper home with God?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

When faced with the blind men who shouted for mercy; 'Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.' Matthew 20:32-34

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Ask God for an open heart and receptive mind as we commence these studies.
- Thank God that He does not reject us when we do wrong, but He only pursues us to embrace us again.

**Session 2: Shame**

9-16 JAN

**ICEBREAKERS**

Describe an embarrassing incident. What is the difference between shame and embarrassment?  
How have you ever tried to cover up a mistake and what was the result?

**KEY THOUGHT**

Shame and guilt are God's devices to motivate us to come to Him for cleansing and reconciliation.

**KEY VERSE**

'For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.' John 3:17

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Is shame a good thing or a bad thing?
2. What is 'toxic shame' and how may it arise?
3. How can we help young people through feelings of low self-worth?
4. List some modern-day idols.
5. Why may we attempt to hide or flee from God?
6. Consider how a modern-day rescue organisation is illustrative of God's plan of salvation.
7. Why is repentance 'going home' and not, for example, 'going to prison'?
8. In what ways is a God of judgment not to be feared?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.' Luke 19:10

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Thank God that you are adopted into His family and you are a joint heir with Christ.
- Pray that you may be a messenger of God's rescue plan to someone estranged from Him.

**Session 3: Made for truth**

17-23 JAN

**ICEBREAKER**

Play a couple of rounds of 'Call My Bluff'. Three different definitions are given for an obscure word. One is correct and two are fabrications. Which is true and which are false?

**KEY THOUGHT**

'Who told you?' is the great ideological question of truth. In other words, where do our ideas and concepts come from? Do they come from the truth of the Word of God or from the lies of the devil and a deceitful fallen world?

**KEY VERSE**

'They exchanged the truth of God for a lie ...'  
Romans 1:25

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Do you hear voices?
2. Why is free will not the same as no will?
3. Give examples of the difference between honest doubt and cynical doubt.
4. Consider the purpose of each item of spiritual armour and weaponry.
5. Why is truth so important?
6. Are godless remedies always bound to fail?
7. How can we be ambassadors for truth?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life."' John 14:6

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Pray for wisdom and discernment to hear God's voice through His Word, His people and His Spirit.
- Pray that you might be a person who speaks and lives by truth such that you influence others to follow you even as you follow Christ.

**Session 4: The choice is ours**

24-31 JAN

**ICEBREAKER**

What is the best decision you have ever made?

**KEY THOUGHT**

God holds each one of us responsible for our actions and reactions, thus empowering our decisions with a holy and eternal perspective.

**KEY VERSE**

'... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ...' Joshua 24:15

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. When does our inner being protest?
2. How may people suppress truth?
3. How can we ensure negative voices from the past do not control our futures?
4. How do we 'get on to God's wavelength'?
5. Why are our choices significant?
6. Give examples of blame shifting.
7. Why is approval of sin, a sin? (See Isa. 5:20.)
8. Agree on a definition of sin.

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.' Luke 22:42

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Confess occasions when you have shifted blame and made wrong choices.
- Pray for God's wisdom as you make choices and for the courage to carry them through.

**Session 5: Acknowledging sin**

1-7 FEB

**ICEBREAKER**

How would you apologise for hurting someone?  
eg verbal face to face, letter or card, gift of flowers or chocolates etc.

**KEY THOUGHT**

Modern society has almost eliminated the word and very concept of personal sin, replacing it with a philosophy of 'if it feels right, do it' or shifting the blame whenever necessary. But failure to acknowledge sin is a failure to acknowledge God and His way of salvation.

**KEY VERSE**

'... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...' Romans 3:23

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Why do we find it so difficult to confess and say sorry for our mistakes and sins?
2. What motivates us to shift blame?
3. What is good and bad about pressure groups?
4. What is the difference between true guilt and false guilt?
5. Why may we think that God does not have our best interests at heart?
6. Why may religious practices be a barrier to salvation?
7. Why do we often practise concealment when the best thing to do is confess?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.' Luke 13:3

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Privately or corporately, as appropriate, confess any sins to God and ask for His forgiveness.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to convict people of sin and lead them to repentance (see John 16:8-11).

**Session 6: The question 'Why?'**

8-12 FEB

**ICEBREAKER**

Describe a time when you have been angry and how you handled those emotions.

**KEY THOUGHT**

The 'Why?' question is the ultimate psychological question because it probes our emotions and motivations, which can make us most uncomfortable.

**KEY VERSE**

'Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?"'  
Genesis 4:6

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Why is probing uncomfortable but necessary for spiritual development?
2. Give examples of godly goals.
3. How do you deal with hurt and anger?
4. How could you be better balanced spiritually?
5. How can we restrain anger without it fermenting deep down within us?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.' 1 Peter 2:23

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Confess any anger that you feel and ask God to remove it.
- Pray that God will help you handle your emotions correctly.



**Session 7: 'Can't get no satisfaction'**

13-18 FEB

**ICEBREAKERS**

Do you ever try to 'keep up with the Joneses'? Is our economy largely based on jealousy? Where do you find fulfilment? eg hobbies, career, children, sport, possessions etc.

**KEY THOUGHT**

The Rolling Stones sang, 'I can't get no satisfaction' and summarised our culture. True fulfilment in life can never be found in things or people, but only in God.

**KEY VERSE**

'Why spend your money on what is not bread, and your labour on what does not satisfy?' Isaiah 55:2

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. Describe the origin, development and consequences of the emotion of jealousy.
2. To what extent is modern society built on the sand of 'demandingness'?
3. Why has God created us to feel strong emotions?
4. How do people try to assuage their spiritual hunger?
5. What do we need to do to experience God's love permeating our hearts?
6. How have past hurts and disappointments affected you?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

'... Jesus ... said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.'" John 7:37-38

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Ask God to heal and touch you with His loving hand where past hurts and disappointments still affect you.
- Come to God and ask Him to fill you with the living water of the Holy Spirit.

**Session 8: Where is your brother?**

19-28 FEB

**ICEBREAKER**

Show the group a photograph of your family or a family member, and describe how you relate to them.

**KEY THOUGHT**

God is concerned not only with how we relate to Him, but also with how we relate to our brothers and sisters in the family of the Church.

**KEY VERSES**

'Where is your brother ...?' Genesis 4:9  
'Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity.' 1 Timothy 5:1-2

**DISCUSSION STARTERS**

1. How might your relationship with others reflect your relationship with God?
2. Why can a Christian be an individual but not an individualist?
3. What does unity look and feel like in a church setting?
4. In what sense is Christ the ultimate burden bearer? (See Isa. 53:4-5.)
5. Discuss the Jubilee campaign to reduce the debt of poorer nations. (Use the internet for research.)

6. How can we practically help suffering and impoverished members of the Christian family?
7. Would prostitutes, Goths and bikers feel welcomed in your church?
8. How can we ensure that the richness of our diversity does not become the rationale for division?
9. Contrast the blood of Abel and the blood of Christ, and how that applies today.
10. What has most impacted you from our studies in this issue and how will you change as a result?

**THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**

Cain did not want a brother, Jesus wants millions of brothers! 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.' Romans 8:29

**PRAYER POINTERS**

- Pray for unity in the Body of Christ and a true 'family feel'.
- Ask for God's divine power to transform you into a fully responsible and responsive person.