



Session 1: Becoming like Jesus

1-8 NOV

ICEBREAKER

Which family member or well-known person do you in some way resemble?

KEY THOUGHT

God has saved us from the penalty of our sins. But not only this – He has also chosen to help us be transformed from immature, forgiven sinners to mature, righteous saints. We are not called to merely represent Jesus but to resemble Him in thought, word and deed.

KEY VERSE

‘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

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How effective are you and your church at (a) evangelism, (b) discipleship?
2. What trials do you face that God could use as opportunities to deepen your faith?
3. How can you overcome unbelief when you pray?
4. Why are we not to compare our lives with the lives of others?
5. Why do people try to shift the blame for their actions?
6. How can you overcome your temptations?

7. How do you feel about the fact that God has specifically chosen you?
8. Explain how you have applied a scriptural principle to your life.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

‘For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.’ John 6:38

‘Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.’ John 14:9

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you to apply the truths in this study to become more like Jesus.
- Pray for people going through trials that they will be spiritually stronger as a result.

Session 2: Taming the tongue

9-17 NOV

ICEBREAKERS

- As we are thinking about our tongues, prepare some subtly flavoured drinks diluted with water for people to savour and try to identify both bitter and sweet tastes. For example, salt water, lemon, vinegar, strawberry, orange, apple etc.
- Try to find some of Winston Churchill’s famous quotes. What made them so powerful and inspiring?

KEY THOUGHT

Our words can be bitter or sweet and have the power of life or death, to bless or curse, to inspire or discourage. To be like Christ we should be people whose words are both holy and wholly uplifting, creating faith and hope in a living and loving God.

KEY VERSE

‘If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless.’ James 1:26

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What do your words reveal about you?
2. How can you avoid being part of a clique?
3. How far should Christians support the rights of illegal immigrants?

4. Contrast working for salvation with works of salvation.
5. If the content of our speech is an indicator of our maturity, how mature are you?
6. Why should we ‘tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth’?
7. Are ‘white lies’ acceptable?
8. In what way is much of our up-to-date news based on breaking the 3,500-year-old Commandments?
9. Contrast intelligence, knowledge and wisdom.

THE EXAMPLES OF JOB AND JESUS

‘Think how you have instructed many, how you have strengthened feeble hands. Your words have supported those who stumbled; you have strengthened faltering knees.’ Job 4:3-4

‘The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.’ John 6:63

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that with God’s help you will have power over your tongue and ask Him to show you if some of your patterns of speech are unhelpful.
- Pray that you will be a person whose words encourage others to experience more of God’s love.



Session 3: Living in God's will

18-24 NOV

ICEBREAKER

Is there something for which you obsessively longed and saved, but once obtained you took it for granted and it became a source of disappointment? For example, a first car which brought independence but ever more expensive repair bills until it eventually had to be scrapped!

KEY THOUGHT

God's will for us is that we should come to know Him and experience His love and guidance in every area of our lives. We are not to be His robots but His companions, achieving satisfaction and contentment through relationship with Him and not with mere earthly treasures.

KEY VERSE

'Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' James 4:7

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How should we respond when we don't get something we really want?
2. Is capitalism based on consumerism a self-destructive system, bankrupt both in fact and philosophy?
3. How are grace and humility linked?
4. What part do we play and what part does God play in overcoming sin?

5. Should repentance involve our emotions?
6. Should a Christian make plans for the future?
7. Is it wrong or difficult for a Christian to be wealthy?

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

- Repent of any wrong desires and particularly where this has involved hurting others.
- Submit your will, plans and desires to God's will.
- Pray for good relationships between church members and pray against any atmosphere of gossip or slander (but not against any individuals!).

Session 4: Patience and prayer

25-30 NOV

ICEBREAKERS

- How good are you at waiting? A friend uncovered the first seeds he had ever sown in his garden after only two weeks to check if they were sprouting. What have you done that showed doubt or impatience?
- Use a simile to describe your prayer life – eg soaring to the heavens like a rocket, infrequent as a leap year, faithful and reliable as Big Ben, lazy as a sloth, a Formula 1 car racing to the finish etc.

KEY THOUGHT

For us, to be like Jesus is not striving to attain perfection but demonstrating the qualities of His life such as forgiveness, patience, reliability, prayerfulness and concern for others.

KEY VERSE

'You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near.' James 5:8

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why are Christians both patient and impatient?
2. Why is forgiving someone not giving into them?
3. Why is trustworthiness and reliability expected of Christians?

4. Is worry a sign of unbelief and a lack of trust in God?
5. Why are you a spiritual giant?
6. How many commands can you find in James' letter, and on which do you need to work?

THE EXAMPLE OF ELIJAH

'Elijah was a human being with a nature such as we have [with feelings, affections and a constitution as ours]; and he prayed earnestly ...' James 5:17, The Amplified Bible

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for those you know who are sick, in trouble or have strayed from the faith.
- Be open to confess your weaknesses, problems and sins to people you trust so they can pray for you.



Session 5: Life, light and fellowship

1-8 DEC

ICEBREAKER

Describe the qualities of a close friend and how fellowship with them makes you feel.

KEY THOUGHT

We were created for fellowship with God and with one another. However, because of sin and selfishness, this is only possible if we ask Jesus to forgive us, and continue to walk in His ways.

KEY VERSE

'We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.' 1 John 1:3

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why do we believe the incarnation is a fact and not a fantasy?
2. Why is it not enough to regard Jesus as a great moral teacher or prophet?
3. How do people try to bypass Jesus?
4. Why may joy be linked to creativity and the things we do rather than the things done for us (see Acts 20:35)?

5. How does Jesus throw light on the 'darkness' of God?
6. Are morality and holiness different?
7. Is perfect light a prerequisite for perfect fellowship?
8. Outline the heart of the gospel message.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.' John 17:20-21

PRAYER POINTERS

- Thank God the Father for sending His Son. Thank Jesus that He came. Thank the Holy Spirit for the fellowship we have with Him and with one another.
- Pray for unity and a deep love between believers.

Session 6: Continuing in Him

9-16 DEC

ICEBREAKER

Try to find some records for continuous activity and ask people to guess what those records are – eg longest marriage, longest time tap dancing, longest time swimming underwater etc.

KEY THOUGHT

It is not enough to simply start the Christian race, we must continue living in Christ and becoming ever more like Him until we eventually meet Him in glory (see 1 Cor. 9:24-27; 2 Tim. 4:6-8). Christianity is not so much a philosophical belief system as a lifestyle relationship.

KEY VERSES

'But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. ... Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.' 1 John 2:5-6

'... the anointing you received from him remains in you ... remain in him ... And now, dear children, continue in him ...' 1 John 2:27-28

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Describe the process of our salvation as if it were being conducted in a court of law (see Zech. 3:1; Rev. 12:10).
2. Is forgiveness possible without atonement and payment of a penalty?

3. Does becoming a Christian necessitate a changed lifestyle?
4. Consider how the modern use of the word 'love' differs from Jesus' description and example.
5. What may cause spiritual blindness?
6. How could you take more positive steps towards people of different age groups?
7. How can you have a value system with the stamp of eternity upon it?
8. Why are superior mental powers actually inferior (see 1 Cor. 2:6-16)?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.' John 17:4

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for God's help to continue becoming ever more like Christ.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and help you understand more of the truth.

**Session 7: Children of God**

17–23 DEC

ICEBREAKER

What are the qualities of a good parent? If someone in the group has recently become a parent, ask them to share their feelings towards their newborn (but not towards their teenager!).

KEY THOUGHT

By a supernatural act based on our faith in Christ, God, who is already the Creator of all, has now become our very own Father and we have become His very own children in His very special family.

KEY VERSE

'How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! ... Dear friends, now we are children of God, and ... we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.' 1 John 3:1–2

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How does God fulfil our deepest need?
2. What evidence do we have that Jesus is 'the absolute Ultimate in character for God and man'?
3. How do we lay down our lives for others without actually dying (see 1 Cor. 15:30–31; 2 Cor. 4:7–12)?
4. What may prevent us from performing little acts of love?

5. Why may our conscience not operate as designed (see 1 Cor. 8:1–13; 1 Tim. 4:1–2; Titus 1:15)?
6. Contrast the work of the Holy Spirit in the Old and New Testaments.
7. Why is the deity of Christ so important?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow-citizens with God's people and members of God's household ...' Ephesians 2:18–19

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for greater revelation of God's Father-like love for us.
- Pray that we will be free of false guilt and condemnation.

Session 8: Perfect love

24–31 DEC

ICEBREAKER

What is your favourite love story from film, book or true life?

KEY THOUGHT

The very nature of God is love and that nature finds its clearest expression in the birth, life and sacrificial death of Jesus – God in Christ painfully reconciling the world to Himself (see 2 Cor. 5:19).

KEY VERSE

'And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.' 1 John 4:16

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Is logic an illogical way to know God (see 1 Cor. 1:18–25)?
2. How does Jesus more clearly reveal a God of love?
3. Why may a wrong view of God lead to perpetual fear?
4. Does God love you because Jesus died for you, or did Jesus die for you because God loves you?
5. Is love a command, a compulsion, a decision or a desire (see 2 Cor. 5:14)?
6. Why are some prayers answered and others apparently not?

7. How can we guard against false believers in the church without creating an atmosphere of suspicion?
8. What are examples of modern-day idols that people worship instead of God and what is the result (see Rom. 1:18–32)?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.' John 15:9

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that these studies will help you grow in faith and become more Christlike.
- Echo Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14–19 that you may truly know and experience God's love.