



FAITH *Shared*

SESSION 4: JESUS'S STORY?



Why does Jesus matter? Why is He important? Why do we think He is worth following?

These are key questions for us as we reflect on our own faith, as we think about communicating our faith, and about inviting others to be part of our communities of faith.

What is it specifically about Jesus that makes a difference to us? In a world of competing truth claims, different philosophies and worldviews, our response to this question needs to be honest, while not reducing the importance of Jesus to what He has done for us individually.

In the following session, we will do some thinking around what we think of Jesus, about what our churches think of Jesus, and how we communicate that both implicitly and explicitly through our words, activities, and actions.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT FOR OUR EVANGELISM? – We need to know why we think what we do of Jesus so that we can communicate our faith effectively but also so we can see why others might perceive our faith differently to us.

INTRODUCING

- Have the participants get into small groups of three or four and give them each a large piece of paper and a selection of pens.
- Have them write the following question in the middle of their piece of paper and mind map some answers to it:
 - **What problem does Jesus solve?**
- NOTE: The wording of this question may seem crude and unusual, however it has been carefully thought about, and is intended to get people thinking about this in ways they may not have previously done so.
 - You may need to help the groups to take this apart further. Encourage them to imagine their life with Jesus with and without Jesus. What is missing from their picture of life without Jesus? Their answer will indicate what issues they see Jesus resolving.
- Come together and share some of your answers and see if there are any shared ideas between your groups.
- Write these ideas on a central flipchart paper and leave them to come back to later.
- It may be helpful to explore how the members of your group felt about answering that question- did they think it was a fair question? If not, why not?

EXPANDING

Video looking at some different emphases on the life, work, and death of Jesus.

EXPLORING

Using the Weekly timetable page, reflect on what your church does throughout the week. In groups fill it in and put all the different activities, whether for those part of the church community or designed for outreach. To help this go faster it may be worth the leader filling it in beforehand. This may also help group members who aren't aware of everything that occurs in the life of the church. In the timetable note:

- **Who is the focus of these activities?** Mark the timetable with two distinct colours so you can see clearly how things are split. Colour the activities that have God as the focus one colour, and Others another colour. For example, God would be the focus of Sunday worship, or a Bible study group, whereas Others might be the focus of a Parent and Toddler group, or a community craft group.
- **As a group reflect on how balanced your colours are.** As a community what do you spend most of your time and energy on? If there is an imbalance, are you happy with it? Do you feel challenged to try and redress any imbalance. This is worth spending a decent amount of time on, and try and ensure that as many voices are heard as possible during this discussion.
- **What idea of Jesus are you suggesting to the people outside the church by the activities your community does?** For example, do you have mostly social action or worship? What are you communicating implicitly by the activities you prioritise?

Something to reflect on:

- The focus of next weeks session is the Church and how you connect with the people in the wider community. It would be great to encourage the members of the group to think about the questions below over the course of the week ahead:
 - Where do they connect with people outside the church?
 - How do the wider community connect with the church?
 - What is the nature of the interactions? Who is the host and the guest?

PRAYING

Using the audio prayers on the Faith Shared webpage, give the group some time and space to reflect on the ideas that you have been exploring through this session.