



# SMALL GROUP OUTLINES



# I AM

These Small Group Outlines are produced by the Youth and Children's Ministry Unit in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview). They are available every month from our website.

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# I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE.

In today's session we will consider what Jesus meant when he said: 'I am the bread of life.' We will spend time in John chapter 6 discovering more about this well-known 'I am' statement and think about how Jesus is the only one who can satisfy and sustain our every need.

## WELCOME


 Who enjoys watching *The Great British Bake Off*?

The most challenging week for most contestants is bread week. Out of all the weeks, this is the one where judge Paul Hollywood comes into his own. He is the bread king!

Watch the clip and then choose which of the three creations you would like to eat the most.

 **Watch: 'Paul Hollywood is part-bread. His chest is a baguette!' | The Great British Bake Off (4:11)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9fh8DcoRNx4>

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 What is your favourite kind of bread? Why do you love it so much?

## WORD

Either read John 6:22-59 or watch the following clip together.

 **Watch: John 6 – Jesus Miraculously Feeds 5,000 People – The Life of Jesus (7:30-13:09)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbxT73t8d\\_U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbxT73t8d_U)


Have a packet of bread sticks and label the bottom of each breadstick from 1-8. Take it in turns to choose a breadstick, look at the number, and then answer the corresponding question below. The questions can be answered in any order. When that person has finished all they want to say in answer to the question, others may also share their thoughts.

1. Why do you think Jesus chose bread as a metaphor to describe himself?
2. What kind of hunger is Jesus talking about?
3. What did Jesus mean when he said, 'The one who feeds on me will live because of me' (v57)?
4. Why did the Jews grumble, and how did Jesus respond?
5. How do we receive the bread of life?
6. What difference does receiving the bread of life make in our lives?
7. How did the Jews miss the point when Jesus spoke of bread that truly satisfies?
8. In what areas of your life do you sometimes feel dissatisfied, and how can Jesus make a difference in this?

People eat bread to satisfy physical hunger and to sustain physical life. But we know that Jesus is speaking metaphorically. He wasn't talking about physical food for our bodies, but about nourishment for our spirits that only Jesus himself can provide. When Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life' he was not saying, 'I am like a freshly baked loaf from Greggs with sesame seeds on top, but 'I am what you need to live' and 'I am the only one who can really nourish you along life's journey.' The bread Jesus offers gives eternal life and quenches spiritual hunger. It's not about relieving physical hunger. Jesus satisfies the deepest needs and desires in our hearts when no one or nothing else can. For bread must be eaten and digested to sustain life, and Jesus must be invited into our daily lives to sustain spiritual life.

 How would you describe your spiritual daily diet?

 In what ways can we invite Jesus into our daily lives to sustain us spiritually?

 What is your response to the following quote?

“Hunger is something God has built into the human to remind us to eat, because without food and water we will die. But there is a deeper spiritual hunger in the human heart that can never be satisfied with anything other than God himself and the gifts of grace he shares with us.’

— WARREN WIERSBE

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If the group would like to discover more about what Jesus meant when he said, ‘I am the bread of life’, then watch and discuss the clip together.

 **Watch: What did Jesus mean when he said, ‘I am the Bread of Life’ (John 6:35)? (6:19)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YLZvJXmP7fo>


### WITNESS

Ask your group if they know the song ‘I can’t get no satisfaction’ by the Rolling Stones.

You could either sing the song and see if they join in or play an extract from the clip below:

 **Watch: Rolling Stones ‘(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction’ on The Ed Sullivan Show (1:14)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ROAKlnaMuRw>

The *Oxford Languages* dictionary defines ‘satisfaction’ as the fulfilment of one’s wishes, expectations, or needs, or the pleasure derived from this.

 Where do you seek your satisfaction?

 **Read:**

**Why spend your money on something that is not really food?**

**Why work for something that doesn’t really satisfy you?**

**Listen closely to me, and you will eat what is good;  
your soul will enjoy the rich food that satisfies.**

— (ISAIAH 55:2 NCV)

Draw a line down the middle of a large piece of paper. On one side draw the ‘dislike’ (thumbs down) sign, and on the other the ‘like’ (thumbs up) sign.

Under the dislike sign ask group members to list any areas of their life in which they personally experience dissatisfaction. This could be a ‘positive’ kind of dissatisfaction, eg ‘I long to know Jesus better’, or ‘I can’t hear Jesus speaking to me’. Alternatively, it could be a negative dissatisfaction, eg ‘I really, really want an iPhone but my parents won’t get me one’, or ‘I really don’t like the way I look’.

For each item that you write on the dislike side, think about what Jesus would say, and any practical response we can make, and write this in the ‘like’ side. You can use other Scriptures as well.

Summarise the discussion by drawing some conclusions about finding satisfaction and fulfilment in our lives in Jesus.

Depending on how open your group are with each other, you may feel it would be more appropriate for each person to do this as an individual exercise, only sharing with the group what they feel comfortable with.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY



 What is your response to the following quote?

“ ‘We live in a world filled with hungry people who are searching for reality and cannot find it. They are spending money on what is not bread and their labour on what does not satisfy. Why? Because we who are enjoying the feast have not told them about Jesus, the bread of life, or have not helped make it possible for others to tell them.’

— WARREN WIERSBE

## WORSHIP

Give each member of the group some salt dough or play dough (recipes shown below).

 <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/how-make-salt-dough-recipe>  
 <https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/playdough-recipe>




As they listen to some music (see link below), ask the group to knead and mould the dough. They could mould their initials on the bread, or make something that reminds them of all they have discussed during the session.

 **Watch: 'You Satisfy My Soul' by Laura Hackett Park (4:51)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2onVqvQAiks>

OR (with lyrics) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXstFCgjBPs>

As they listen and reflect, ask the following questions:

-  Do you believe Jesus can provide you with what you need?
-  Are you relying on Jesus to meet your needs, or do you seek to meet them in other ways? How can you remember that God is your ultimate provider?
-  Is there any attitude or action that you need to change in your life as you seek to find all your nourishment and fulfilment in Jesus?

Encourage each person to make their own private response to God during this reflection.

If you have used salt dough, then they could take the bread home with instructions on how to bake it!

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Split the group into pairs and ask them to share with each other one need that they have at the moment or one area where they long to feel satisfaction and fulfilment. Spend some time praying for each other for these needs.

Thank Jesus that he is the bread of life and for all that this/he means to you!

# I AM THE GATE. I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In today's session we will explore what Jesus meant when he said in John 10, 'I am the gate' and 'I am the good shepherd'. We'll consider how these words are applicable to us today and pray for those who do not currently know the Good Shepherd. There will also be an opportunity to get creative as we dig deeper into the words of Psalm 23.

## WELCOME

Divide the group into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little-known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too.

For example:

1. I have a pet tarantula.
2. I was born in Cornwall.
3. My favourite food is sprouts.
4. My grandmother is called Doris.
5. My favourite colour is lime green.

Collect the cards into two team piles. Each team draws one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 What was the most fascinating fact that you discovered about someone today? Explain your answer.

## WORD

A shepherd in Palestine would have been, and still is, very different from shepherds in our country today. A shepherd was a person who owned between 20 to 100 sheep and/or goats. He spent his days walking around with them making sure they were safe, well fed and watered. He knew each sheep by name and he prized them mainly for their wool.



It was a hard life. No flock ever grazed without a shepherd, and he was never off duty. Since there was little grass, the sheep were bound to wander and so had to be constantly watched. The sheep were always liable to stray away and get lost or injured. It was also dangerous for the shepherd, who had to guard the flock against wild animals, especially wolves, and there were always thieves and robbers ready to steal the sheep. Constant vigilance, fearless courage, and patient love for his flock were the necessary characteristics of the shepherd.

Keeping this in mind, let's turn to the words of Jesus when he said, 'I am the good shepherd.'

Either read John 10:1-30 or watch the following clip together.

 **Watch: English SN – John 10:1-42 (Stop at 3:49)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMilOg4C5XI>

The group will need to refer to John 10:1-30 to discuss the following questions.

-  What responsibilities are placed on the sheep in this passage?
-  Who or what is represented by the thief or wolf in Jesus' story? Who would they be today?

- 🗨️ Compare the goals of the thief/wolf with the goals of the shepherd.
- 🗨️ What is the difference between the hired hand and the shepherd? Why?
- 🗨️ What happens to the sheep that enter the pen through Jesus?
- 🗨️ What do you think the phrase 'They will come in and go out and find pasture' means?
- 🗨️ How has the Good Shepherd cared for you in your life? Share an example of a time of provision, protection, or guidance.
- 🗨️ How do you recognise Jesus' voice?

A sheepfold is where the sheep sleep for the night. It is a safe haven. Usually shepherds would bring their flocks back to the village as the sun began to set and penned them often with two or three other flocks. If they had taken the sheep far away they would gather them in a cave or gully, or if these were not available make a pen for them out of bushes and logs. The aim was to protect the sheep throughout the night.

If the sheepfold was in the village, it would usually have a strong gate or door. Through this door the shepherd would enter in the morning to call out his sheep, and his sheep immediately recognised his voice and filed out. The other sheep took no notice. Thieves and robbers, in contrast, would climb in some other way. If the sheepfold was in the countryside, the shepherd laid himself down across the opening, and no sheep or person could get in or out except over his body. He would literally sleep across the entrance as a human door. So when Jesus said 'I am the gate' (10:7,9) he envisages the shepherd sleeping across the entrance to the sheepfold in this way.

- 🗨️ What is your response to the following quote?

“ ‘When Jesus is your shepherd and you follow him, the future is your friend and you don't have to be afraid.’

— WARREN WIERSBE

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If your group would like to discover more about Jesus' statement 'I am the good shepherd' then watch and discuss the clip together.

- 📺 **Watch: I am the Good Shepherd – John 10:11 – Our Daily Bread Video Devotional (2:37)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9tMt639sNY>

## WITNESS

Give each person a printed copy of Psalm 23 from a variety of translations. Ask the group to annotate the psalm with phrases that show what God does for us as our Good Shepherd.

I've included different translations at the end of this session.


Some thoughts are listed below:

- \* He provides for us.
- \* He leads us to a place where all our needs can be met.
- \* He restores our souls, as he knows exactly how and why we're hurting and can heal our very private hurts.
- \* He shows us exactly the best places to walk and the best decisions we can make to keep us from harm.
- \* He will help us walk through all the difficulties of life (including death) without fear.
- \* We can receive comfort from him.
- \* Although life may be difficult around us, we can be blessed by God.
- \* His goodness and love will be with us at all times.
- \* We can live in his presence.

Once the group have gathered these thoughts together, ask them to get creative. Encourage the group to create a piece of artwork, poetry or song lyric that represents the thoughts of Psalm 23. Provide resources that are applicable to the skills and talents of your group.

Give the group the opportunity to share and discuss their creations.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 How could you use your creative representation of Psalm 23 to bring others closer to the Good Shepherd?

### WORSHIP

Jesus longs to be the Good Shepherd to every person on this earth.

In John 10:14-16 Jesus says these words:

**<sup>14</sup> 'I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, <sup>15</sup> just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup> I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.'**


— JOHN 10:14-16 NLT

 Who does Jesus specifically mention and show concern for in these verses?

Jesus mentioned that there are other sheep who are not yet in his sheepfold and shares that he 'must bring them also' (John 10:16).

 What role do we play in bringing lost sheep to the Good Shepherd?

Ask each member of the group to name a person in their lives who does not yet know Jesus, or no longer believes in him. Jot these names down so that the group can share in a time of prayer together. If required, use the following music track as part of the prayer time.

 **Watch: Phil Wickham – 'Psalm 23' (ft. Tiffany Hudson) Official Audio (4:34)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KU5ZbHbwiBA>

OR <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q25xEFyTHFY>

When the music has finished, read out the list of names, and pray with the group.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

To bring the session to a close, read *The Voice* translation of Psalm 23.

<sup>1</sup> The Eternal is my shepherd, He cares for me always.

<sup>2</sup> He provides me rest in rich, green fields  
beside streams of refreshing water.

He soothes my fears;  
<sup>3</sup> He makes me whole again,  
steering me off worn, hard paths  
to roads where truth and righteousness echo His name.

<sup>4</sup> Even in the unending shadows of death's darkness,  
I am not overcome by fear.

Because You are with me in those dark moments,  
near with Your protection and guidance,  
I am comforted.

<sup>5</sup> You spread out a table before me,  
provisions in the midst of attack from my enemies;  
You care for all my needs, anointing my head with soothing, fragrant oil,

filling my cup again and again with Your grace.  
⁶ Certainly Your faithful protection and loving provision will pursue me  
where I go, always, everywhere.  
I will always be with the Eternal,  
in Your house for ever.  
— (PSALM 23 VOICE)





## DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF PSALM 23

### PSALM 23 (NIV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.  
<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures,  
he leads me beside quiet waters,  
<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul.  
He guides me along the right paths  
for his name's sake.  
<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord  
for ever.

### PSALM 23 (MSG)

<sup>1-3</sup> God, my shepherd!  
I don't need a thing.  
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,  
you find me quiet pools to drink from.  
True to your word,  
you let me catch my breath  
and send me in the right direction.  
<sup>4</sup> Even when the way goes through Death Valley,  
I'm not afraid  
when you walk at my side.  
Your trusty shepherd's crook  
makes me feel secure.  
<sup>5</sup> You serve me a six-course dinner  
right in front of my enemies.  
You revive my drooping head;  
my cup brims with blessing.  
<sup>6</sup> Your beauty and love chase after me  
every day of my life.  
I'm back home in the house of God  
for the rest of my life.

### PSALM 23 (CEV)

<sup>1</sup> You, Lord, are my shepherd.  
I will never be in need.  
<sup>2</sup> You let me rest in fields  
of green grass.  
You lead me to streams  
of peaceful water,  
<sup>3</sup> and you refresh my life.  
You are true to your name,  
and you lead me  
along the right paths.  
<sup>4</sup> I may walk through valleys  
as dark as death,  
but I won't be afraid.  
You are with me,  
and your shepherd's rod  
makes me feel safe.  
<sup>5</sup> You treat me to a feast,  
while my enemies watch.  
You honour me as your guest,  
and you fill my cup  
until it overflows.  
<sup>6</sup> Your kindness and love  
will always be with me  
each day of my life,  
and I will live for ever  
in your house, Lord.

### PSALM 23 (AMP)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my Shepherd [to feed, to guide and to shield me],  
I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He lets me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside the still and quiet waters.

<sup>3</sup> He refreshes and restores my soul (life);  
He leads me in the paths of righteousness  
for His name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the [sunless] valley of the shadow of death,  
I fear no evil, for You are with me;  
Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort and console me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.  
You have anointed and refreshed my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life,  
And I shall dwell for ever [throughout all my days] in the house and in the presence of the Lord.

### PSALM 23 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have all that I need.

<sup>2</sup> He lets me rest in green meadows;  
he leads me beside peaceful streams.

<sup>3</sup> He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths,  
bringing honour to his name.

<sup>4</sup> Even when I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.

Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a feast for me  
in the presence of my enemies.  
You honour me by anointing my head with oil.

My cup overflows with blessings.

<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will live in the house of the Lord  
for ever.

# I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD


In today's session we reflect on Jesus' words, 'I am the light of the world.' We'll explore what it meant to those listening, how the religious leaders responded, and consider what these words mean for us today. How can we let our little light shine in this dark world?

## WELCOME

*Try to make the room as dark as possible for the group. Discuss with the group what it feels like to be in darkness.*

*Turn the lights back on and ask each group member to share their most vivid experience of a dark place and how it made them feel; eg it might be a time they were afraid of the dark in the night, or a trip into some underground caves.*

For a lot of people darkness makes them feel uneasy, even fearful. Light, in contrast, is reassuring and felt to be positive. All around the world, darkness is often a metaphor for evil or feeling lost and uncertain. Light is a metaphor for hope, direction and certainty.


 What other metaphors can you think of for light and dark?

### METAPHORS FOR DARKNESS

*The darkness is a void.  
The darkness is a veil.  
The darkness is a shadow.  
The darkness is an abyss.  
The darkness is a tunnel.*

### METAPHORS FOR LIGHT

*The light at the end of the tunnel.  
A light in the darkness.  
A guiding light.  
A ray of light.  
A beacon of light.*

 How is the idea of darkness and light used within films or songs?

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*Share the song 'This Little Light of Mine' to start off the session.*

 **Watch: 'This Little Light of Mine' – Listener Kids (3:30)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKkblZtqhyQ>






## WORD

*Either read John 8:12-30 or watch the clip together.*

 **Watch: Lumo – Gospel of John Chapter 8:12-30 (3:40)**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl\\_UkHOc7nY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jl_UkHOc7nY)

The words 'I am the light of the world' caused confusion in the minds of the religious leaders, and yet many who were listening believed in Jesus.

*The group will need to turn to John 8:12-30 to discuss the following questions.*

-  In verse 12 Jesus declared, 'I am the light of the world.' What do you think he meant?
-  What is the light that Jesus is talking about?
-  What is the darkness that Jesus is talking about?
-  What does it mean to 'walk in the light'?
-  What does Jesus say the people should do?

We're going to watch a clip that helps us to understand more about Jesus' statement 'I am the light of the world'.

▶ **Watch:** What did Jesus mean when he said, 'I am the light of the world' in John 8:12?' – GotQuestions.org. (4:12)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tM4mjTK2IfM>

- 💬 What two types of light are there in the world? How does each one show us God's character?
- 💬 What three aspects of God's light does this metaphor describe?
- 💬 How can the light of Jesus dispel the darkness of this world?
- 💬 What does God promise to those who follow him?
- 💬 What kinds of people do not like the light?
- 💬 Are there any areas of your life that you feel are in darkness?
- 💬 How can you rely on Jesus as your 'light' today and every day?

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*If your group would like to discover more about Jesus' statement 'I am the light of the world', then watch and discuss the clip together.*

▶ **Watch:** Walk in the Light! – John 8:12 – Our Daily Bread Video Devotional (2:00)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_A88a7Eculc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_A88a7Eculc)

### WITNESS

*The aim of this activity is for the young people to create a video short which answers the question, 'How can I let my little light shine?' Depending on space and resources, you may dedicate this time to planning and preparation. You can work as a whole group or divide into teams. Make sure the group has access to the Scriptures below to help.*

*When the group has had time to plan or film their video shorts, then share your ideas together. How could these creative efforts be used to spread the light of Jesus in your church and community?*

**<sup>3</sup> All things were made by him, and nothing was made without him. <sup>4</sup> In him there was life, and that life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it.**

— (JOHN 1:3-5 NCV)

**<sup>35</sup> Jesus answered, 'The light will be with you for only a little longer. Walk in the light while you can. Then you won't be caught walking blindly in the dark. <sup>36</sup> Have faith in the light while it is with you, and you will be children of the light.'**

— (JOHN 12:35-36 CEV)

**<sup>5</sup> This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him.**

**<sup>6-7</sup> If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're obviously lying through our teeth – we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin.**

— (1 JOHN 1:5-7 MSG)

**<sup>19-21</sup> 'This is the crisis we're in: God-light streamed into the world, but men and women everywhere ran for the darkness. They went for the darkness because they were not really interested in pleasing God. Everyone who makes a practice of doing evil, addicted to denial and illusion, hates God-light and won't come near it, fearing a painful exposure. But anyone**

working and living in truth and reality welcomes God-light so the work can be seen for the God-work it is.'

— (JOHN 3:19-21 MSG)

<sup>14</sup> 'You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden.

<sup>15</sup> And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put it on a lampstand so the light shines for all the people in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do and will praise your Father in heaven.'

— (MATTHEW 5:14-16 NCV)

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Do you know someone who is going through a difficult time?

If so, think of one thing that you could do to shine some light into their darkness.

## WORSHIP

To give your group the opportunity to reflect on today's session, choose from the following activities. A selection of music is provided to use during the time of reflection.

- \* Pray for each person in turn, that they would be filled with the light of Jesus and be able to shine for him in their daily lives.
- \* It may be apparent that there is someone in the group who is going through a particular 'dark season' in their life. Pray together for this person if they would like you to.
- \* Thank Jesus that he is the light of life and for all that this/he means to you!

▶ Lauren Daigle – 'Light of the World' (Lyric Video) (4:09)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_cLhaZIBSpo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_cLhaZIBSpo)

▶ Kari Jobe: 'We Are' (acoustic) (3:36)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B07iK9uh9qY>

▶ Nick & Becky Drake – 'City on a Hill' (Official Lyric Video) – Worship for Everyone (4:40)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cg2We2iK7og>

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Bring the session to a close with the prayer attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi.

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master,  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
Amen.

# I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

In today's session we explore what it means to know that our path is set and sure. We look at the words of Jesus when he said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life' and how walking with Jesus sustains us on life's journey. We will also consider what it means to bring a glimpse of Heaven here to earth as we follow Jesus throughout our lives.

## WELCOME

*Ask the group to describe how they eat a Cadbury's Creme Egg. Do they all do it the same way? If not, how does it vary? Which is the best way to eat a Cadbury's Creme Egg?*

Steward Anderson took to YouTube in 2013 and set himself the challenge of eating a Cadbury's Creme Egg in a different way for 31 days.

*Choose one of the following clips to show the group. Discuss the many different unusual ways that you could choose to eat a Creme Egg.*

 **Watch: Cadbury Creme Egg Challenge, Day 27: Boiled Creme Egg (1:50)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLPRvmKa81c>

 **Watch: Cadbury Creme Egg Challenge, Day 31: Pickled Egg (2:00)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLD4sLhkTYI>

*After a discussion, agree as a group the 'best' way to eat a Creme Egg.*


In today's session we will discover that Jesus says he is the way ... the right way, the best way, the only way.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*Give each member of the group a Cadbury's Creme Egg and see if they can eat it in a creative or unusual way.*


## WORD

The Greek word for life (zoe) is used 36 times in John's Gospel, which is more times than it is used in the other three Gospels combined (16 times).

 Where have we met the word 'life' in the other 'I Am' statements?

Today we are considering Jesus as 'the way and the truth and the life' (John 14:6).

In John 14 we find some very bewildered disciples! Again and again Jesus had told his disciples where he was going, but somehow they had never understood. He had told them that he was going to the Father who had sent him, and with whom he was one.

 Why do you think it was so difficult for the disciples to understand what Jesus was saying?

 **Read:**

<sup>1</sup> **'Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.'**

<sup>5</sup> **Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?'**

<sup>6</sup> **Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except**

through me.' If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.'

— (JOHN 14:1-7)

To reassure them, Jesus first encourages his disciples not to let their hearts be troubled because he is leaving them to prepare a place for them in Heaven where he will be. What is more, he says, 'I will come back to escort you there. Don't be troubled,' he continues, since 'you know the way to the place I am going.' At this point it becomes all too much for Thomas, who blurts out, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'

- 🗨️ Thomas is known as a doubter and sceptic. Do you think this representation is fair? If so, why – or why not?
- 🗨️ What can we learn from Thomas's honest response to what Jesus is saying?

We can feel the dread and uncertainty in Thomas's words. A future without Jesus physically with them was a very scary idea. None of the disciples would have liked this idea. It is thus to anxious and fearful disciples that Jesus says, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' These words in context are not spoken to condemn others who are not disciples of Jesus. They are spoken to assure and comfort those who are disciples of Jesus then and now. They direct our attention to Jesus who reveals God and speaks as God; to Jesus who will never abandon us or forsake us, and to Jesus who sustains us on life's journey and at the end will welcome us into Heaven.

- 🗨️ How is our understanding of Jesus' statement, 'I am the way and the truth and the life' different today from what it would have been for his first disciples?

If we want to find the way to God, if we want to know the truth about God, if we want eternal life, then we will find these things in Jesus. Unlike all other religious leaders who pointed away from themselves by giving teaching on how their followers could find the way to God, Jesus says, 'I am that way', 'Follow me', 'Believe in me'. He was not suggesting he was a second God but rather that he was God. In believing, following and worshipping him, we are believing, following and worshipping the one God whom Jesus perfectly reveals.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*If the young people would like to understand more about Jesus' statement 'I am the way and the truth and the life', then watch and discuss the following clip.*

- ▶️ **Watch: What did Jesus mean when he said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life'? (John 14:6)**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTS1tMC38AQ>

## WITNESS

Heaven was a reality for Jesus, and yet he taught his disciples to think less about a life that was to come, and more about how to live a life now in relationship with God. He encouraged his disciples to live with a passion to see Heaven made visible on earth through their words and actions.

*Make sure every group member has access to the text below.*


## BRINGING HEAVEN TO EARTH


**I believe in Heaven. I have for a long time now. With me it is not just a matter of faith either. I also believe in Heaven because of all the evidence I see here on earth. I see this evidence not only in the glorious natural world all around us but also in the endless acts of love that come from the hearts of people as well. These are the people who bring a bit of Heaven to earth every day and they are the ones I wish to thank now.**

**To all the people then who pick up the rubbish off the ground and plant trees and flowers in its place, thank you. To every parent who spends the day hard at work**

and then goes home and makes the time to play with and read to their kids, thank you. To every kind heart who has ever taken in and loved a stray dog or cat, thank you. To every person who has ever opened their purse or wallet and given to a charity not out of duty but out of love, thank you. To everyone who has ever offered a ride, opened a door, or shared a smile with a stranger, thank you. To every Good Samaritan who has stopped along the way to help a person in need, thank you. To every gentle spirit who has shared their laughter, encouraged a friend, or inspired another soul, thank you. To every single person who has tried to make this world a little better through what they do, thank you. And to every soul who not only knows the words 'Love your neighbour as yourself' but tries to live them as well, thank you. God doesn't just want each of us to one day reach Heaven, he also wants each of us to bring a little Heaven down here to earth as well. Do your best then to love and be loved, to care for others and the world around you, to create joy rather than sadness, and to help everyone you can, every chance you can. Do your best to let God's love live through you. Then you will be ready for Heaven, because you will carry a bit of Heaven with you wherever you go.


— JOSEPH J MAZZELLA

 Have you ever done any of the things that the author is saying thank you for? If not, why not?

 In what ways are you personally allowing a glimpse of Heaven on earth?

The truths about the life to come were very real for early Salvationists and drove their whole way of life. They prioritised the things of God to prepare for Heaven, and the reality of hell also generated urgency in sharing the gospel. They also wanted to live lives pleasing and honouring to God, as a response to his great love revealed in Jesus.

 How does the reality of Heaven and hell 'generate urgency' in you to share Jesus' life with others?

 How should our knowledge of the future life that awaits us impact and change the way that we live on earth now?

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

*If the young people would like to understand more about Heaven and earth, then watch and discuss the following clip.*

 **Watch: Learn Where Heaven and Earth Overlap (stop at 5:53)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zy2AQLK6C5k>

## WORSHIP

Thomas à Kempis was a devout and holy monk who lived in the 15th century. He is well known for the following quote:

“ ‘Without the Way, there is no going.  
Without the Truth, there is no knowing.  
Without the Life, there is no living.’

— THOMAS À KEMPIS

As we share in a time of reflection, have a go at writing your own version of Thomas à Kempis's words.

*Display for the group the opening section of each line of the saying.*


*Without the Way ...*

*Without the Truth ...*

*Without the Life ...*



A music track is shown below to use as part of this time of reflection. When the music ends, then encourage the group to share their adaptation of Kempis's words.

 **Watch: Pat Barrett – 'The Way (New Horizon)' – Lyric Video (4:19)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOzsJlk8p6I>

Bring the session to a close by thanking God that he is the way, the truth and the life for anyone who follows him.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

As a final act of worship, read the lyrics from Pat Barrett's song 'The Way'.

**You are the way  
You are the way  
You're the light shining bright in the darkness  
Jesus, you are the way  
Jesus, the only way  
All my days are secure in your promise  
Never standing alone  
You're the truth, you're the life, you're my future  
Jesus, you made a way.**

— PAT BARRETT

# BRINGING HEAVEN TO EARTH

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