



SMALL GROUP OUTLINES



THE LIFE OF JESUS

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.

For more information and other resources, visit salvationist.org.uk/resources/youth-ministry-resources

SESSION ONE:

PICTURES OF JESUS

How do you picture Jesus? In Session One we will explore many images of Jesus from around the world. We'll consider how Scripture adds detail to our picture of Jesus and helps us to understand more of his character.

SESSION TWO:

THE LIFE OF JESUS

In today's session we will construct a timeline of the life of Jesus and discover the many amazing events he experienced. We will also explore how loving Jesus and living for him impacts the timeline of our own lives.

SESSION THREE:

DOING LIFE TOGETHER WITH JESUS

Session Three helps us to consider what it really means to 'do life with Jesus'. Rather than focusing on external expressions of faith, we'll be challenged to dig deep and discover what following Jesus looks like in our everyday lives.

SESSION FOUR:

THE PURPOSE OF JESUS

In today's session we'll spend time thinking about the purpose and mission of Jesus. We'll also consider how the purpose of Jesus impacts our lives, the decisions we make and the way we worship.

Any text in italics represents notes for the leader. It gives more context around the Scripture/activity. You may choose to share verbatim, summarise or not share at all.

PICTURES OF JESUS

How do you picture Jesus? In Session One we will explore many images of Jesus from around the world. We'll consider how Scripture adds detail to our picture of Jesus and helps us to understand more of his character.

WELCOME

GAME: GUESS THE FAMOUS PERSON

Give each member of the group a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of a famous person that they look up to or admire. They must keep the identity of the person to themselves. This could be a historical figure, a sportsperson, or a celebrity. Take it in turns for each member of the group to show their picture and see if the others can guess who it is. Clues can be given if the group is struggling to guess the person.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

If you're feeling bad about the quality of your artwork, then have a go at this BuzzFeed quiz and see if you can guess the celebrity. It might make you feel better about your drawing skills!

<https://www.buzzfeed.com/spenceralthouse/name-the-celebs-by-bad-drawings-quiz>

WORD

* Picture what you think Jesus might look like and try to describe him to the group.

Show the group a range of images of Jesus. Links to gather the images are provided below.

<https://altusfineart.com/collections/pictures-of-jesus>

<https://artsandculture.google.com/usergallery/3gIyeGMIcDEKA>

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/icanby/jesus-in-different-cultures>

DISCUSS

- 🗨️ What images do you relate to the most?
- 🗨️ Which images are surprising to you? Explain why.
- 🗨️ How does your imagined version of Jesus compare with the images you have been looking at?
- 🗨️ Do you have a favourite image of Jesus? Where does this image come from?
- 🗨️ Do you think how we see Jesus influences our faith in any way? Explain your answer.

Throughout history, artists have created images of Jesus Christ, using a number of media. Music, art, poetry, dance and preaching have provided ways for us to picture Jesus. In this next section of our session we are going to look at words and phrases to describe and develop our ideas of Jesus.

Place a large sheet of paper on the floor in front of the group and provide felt-tips or markers. Using the following resources how you choose, ask the group to gather words and phrases that relate to the character of Jesus. Ask the group to use their creativity to formulate those words and phrases into a picture of Jesus.

Keep hold of the finished picture to use in future weeks as you can continue to add words, phrases and images to this picture of Jesus.

WATCH

-  **That's My King – SM Lockbridge**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE>



READ

Scripture references

- ▶ Colossians 1:15-23
- ▶ 1 John 1:1-4
- ▶ Philippians 2:5-11
- ▶ Luke 4:18-19
- ▶ Isaiah 53:2-7

ASK


Look at the words and phrases you have used to describe Jesus and the picture you have created.

-  Do you feel you know this Jesus? Explain your thoughts.
-  What aspects of Jesus would you like to get to know better?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Watch the clip together.




-  **Hidden For Year's Artist's Famous Painting of Jesus Emerges – CBS Chicago (2:32)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqDvpKPNqBY>

-  What is your response to the story and Akiane Kramarik's depiction of Jesus?

WITNESS

You may have a clear picture and understanding of who Jesus is. At times you may have also struggled and doubted your faith in him. In a world that is becoming increasingly secular you can often find that other people don't see the same image of Jesus.

DISCUSS

-  What is it about Jesus that amazes you?
-  How would you describe him to someone who has little knowledge of him or doesn't believe?
-  What can you do in your life that means more people can see the Jesus you see?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

As we move through these sessions, we will spend time considering how we can live our lives like Jesus. Begin thinking through what it might mean to share a picture of Jesus in your own life. Discuss your ideas with the rest of the group.

WORSHIP

In today's session we have spent a lot of time considering the different pictures of Jesus that we see in our world. We have also discussed his character and asked questions about his nature.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus asks Peter, 'Who do you say I am?' (Luke 9:20)

Play some quiet background music and ask each person to write down or draw their own individual picture of Jesus. Use these in a time of prayer, thanking Jesus for who he was on the Earth, who he is now, and expressing your desire to know him and love him more.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

The perfect way to discover more about Jesus is to turn to Scripture. Read one of the Gospels during this week to discover more about the life Jesus lived on Earth. As you read, note down aspects of Jesus' life that impact you in some way. Each Gospel is a different length, so you can decide which one you feel you can complete in the given time frame.

Matthew has 28 chapters – 5 chapters a day

Mark has 16 chapters – 4 chapters a day

Luke has 24 chapters – 4 chapters a day

John has 21 chapters – 3.5 chapters a day

THE LIFE OF JESUS

In today's session we will construct a timeline of the life of Jesus and discover the many amazing events he experienced. We will also explore how loving Jesus and living for him impacts the timeline of our own lives.



WELCOME

Leader's notes: Give each member of the group a piece of paper and five minutes to write a timeline of their life. Ask them to include the key events and milestones which they have experienced. Once they have done this, ask them to share a special moment from their timeline with the rest of the group.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Watch and discuss the photo timeline in the clip.

 **Portrait of Lottie, 0-20 years (5:06)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfqpgiTMUEg>

-  How have you changed since you were younger?
-  What aspects of your personality have changed or remained the same?

WORD

Today we are considering the life of Jesus. Watch this clip carefully, as the content will come in handy for our next activity.

WATCH

 **The journey of Jesus in 3½ minutes (3:43)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9GSs5B-0yQ>

Leader's notes: Prior to the session, you will need to cut up the 'Timeline of Jesus' handout. If you divide the group into teams you will need additional sets of cards. Shuffle the packs so that the events aren't in the correct order. Ask the group to place the events in the life of Jesus in the correct order. Once they have had sufficient time, then check through the list as shown below. The cards do not have Bible references on them.

Isaiah's prophecy foretold the coming of the Messiah – Isaiah 9:6-7

Born in Bethlehem – Luke 2:1-20

Jesus teaching in the Temple after running away from his parents – Luke 2:41-52

Worked as a carpenter – Mark 6:3 & Matthew 13:55

Baptised by John the Baptist – Matthew 3:13-17

Temptation in the desert – Matthew 4:1-11

Calling of the first disciples – Matthew 4:18-22

Changes water into wine at Cana – John 2:1-11

Talked to the Samaritan woman – John 4

Sermon on the Mount – Matthew 5-7

Brings Jarius's daughter back to life – Mark 5:21-43

Feeds 5,000 – Matthew 14:13-21

Walks on water – Matthew 14:22-33

Raises Lazarus from the dead – John 11:38-44

The 'Palm Sunday' triumphant entry into Jerusalem – John 12:12-19

The Last Supper – Matthew 26:17-30

Prayed with his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-46

Betrayed by Judas – Matthew 26:47-56

Crucifixion – Mark 15:21-41

Appears to Mary Magdalene – John 20:11-18

Appears to two travellers on the road to Emmaus – Luke 24:13-35


Cooks breakfast for the disciples – Luke 24:13-35

The Great Commission – Matthew 28:16-20

The Ascension – Act 1:6-11


DISCUSS


 In what ways did you find this activity challenging?

 Which events in the life of Jesus would you like to discover more about? Explain why.

Working in pairs or individually, ask the group to choose three events they would like to discover more about. Share the Bible references for their event and give them time to dig into the story. Bring the group back together to share what they have discovered.


ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 Are there any key events in the life of Jesus that you feel should be added to the timeline?

 What are they, and why do you feel they are significant?

WITNESS

Look at the timeline of your life that you created at the start of this session.

 Do the events you have listed include any spiritual moments? If not, why do you think you missed these out?

Take a moment to add any milestones or moments from your spiritual journey to your timeline. If you feel comfortable, then share these with the group.

In the next session, we will be thinking about how our lives show Jesus to others. Imagine your timeline stretching into the future. Discuss as a group what kind of moments would show the love of Jesus in your life. Try and aim for two ways this week where you can show the love of Jesus to others. Ask God for the courage to add them to the timeline of your life.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Discuss the following quotes about Jesus Christ.

 What do they add to your understanding of his life and purpose?

“ ‘Christ literally walked in our shoes and entered into our affliction. Those who will not help others until they are destitute reveal that Christ’s love has not yet turned them into the sympathetic persons the gospel should make them.’

— TIM KELLER

“ ‘Each one of them is Jesus in disguise.’

— MOTHER TERESA

“ ‘By a Carpenter mankind was made, and only by that Carpenter can mankind be remade.’

— DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

“ ‘Jesus does not give recipes that show the way to God as other teachers of religion do. He is himself the way.’

— KARL BARTH

WORSHIP

What one thing has struck you – for the first time, or afresh – about the life of Jesus?

As you reflect on this question, listen to Steffany Gretzinger’s updated version of the song ‘There is None Like You.’

 **Steffany Gretzinger – Faith of my Father Album (3:55)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OkrMzHFxa0I>

Share in prayer together to bring the session to a close.

Isaiah's prophecy
foretold the coming
of the Messiah

Born in Bethlehem

Talks with the
teaching in the
Temple at Jerusalem

Worked as a carpenter

Baptised by John the
Baptist

Temptation in the
desert

Calling of the first
disciples

Changes the water
into wine at Cana

Talked to the
Samaritan women

Sermon on the Mount

Bring Jarius's
daughter back to life

Feeds 5,000

Walks on water

Raises Lazarus from
the dead

The 'Palm Sunday'
triumphant entry in
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The Last Supper

Prayed with
his disciples in
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Betrayed by Judas

Crucifixion

Appears to Mary
Magdalene

Appears to two
travellers on the road
to Emmaus

Cooks breakfast for
the disciples

The Great
Commission

The Ascension

DOING LIFE TOGETHER WITH JESUS

Session Three helps us to consider what it really means to 'do life with Jesus'. Rather than focusing on external expressions of faith, we'll be challenged to dig deep and discover what following Jesus looks like in our everyday lives.

WELCOME

- * Can anyone in the group do a good impression of someone famous?

Ask them to try it and see if the others can guess who it is.

Just for fun, watch this celebrity impressions clip.

- ▶ **Celebrity Impersonator Sings 'Fancy' as Adele, Britney Spears, Billie Eilish, and More! (4:20)**

Start at 2:10

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=__xYMWVHcTg

- 💬 Which impression is your favourite? Explain why.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Challenge the group to sing a nursery rhyme in the style of a famous singer.

WORD

- 📖 **Read the following Scripture verses together.**

- 💬 What is the common theme running through these Scripture verses?

'For you know the saying, "We live in God; we move in God; we exist in God." And still another said, "We are indeed God's children."

— ACTS 17:28 (VOICE)

'I have been crucified with the Anointed One – I am no longer alive – but the Anointed is living in me; and whatever life I have left in this failing body I live by the faithfulness of God's Son, the One who loves me and gave His body on the cross for me.'

— GALATIANS 2:20 (VOICE)

'But you do not live in the flesh. You live in the Spirit, assuming, of course, that the Spirit of God lives inside of you. The truth is that anyone who does not have the Spirit of the Anointed living within does not belong to God. If the Anointed One lives within you, even though the body is as good as dead because of the effects of sin, the Spirit is infusing you with life now that you are right with God. If the Spirit of the One who resurrected Jesus from the dead lives inside of you, then you can be sure that He who raised Him will cast the light of life into your mortal bodies through the life-giving power of the Spirit residing in you.'

— ROMANS 8:9-11 (VOICE)

All these verses speak of Jesus living in us and through us. Our old selves no longer exist, we now only live in Jesus, and we experience his resurrection life running through us. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul shares his perspective on what it means to live our lives for Christ.

- 📖 **Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 to 11:1 in both the NKJV and NIV translations.**

³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offence, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I also please all *men* in all *things*, not seeking my own *profit*, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

11¹ Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.'

— 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 TO 11:1 (NKJV)

³¹ So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. ³² Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God – ³³ even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. **11¹ Follow** my example, as I **follow** the example of Christ.'

— 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31-11:1 (NIVUK)

💬 What difference do you notice between the two translations?

💬 Which word is translated differently in 1 Corinthians 11:1?

In the book *Jesus Manifesto*, Sweet and Viola describe how the 'new' *King James Version*, published in 1611, changed the biblical word rendered as 'follow' in earlier translations to the word 'imitate'.

💬 Which word do you think best reflects doing life together with Jesus?

💬 Which word do you prefer? Explain why.

Today some Bible translations, like the *New International Version*, use the word 'follow' rather than 'imitate' throughout virtually the whole text.

💬 What do you think the difference is between striving to be like Jesus and allowing Jesus to dwell within you?

Read and discuss the following quote:

“**But the good news is that Jesus doesn't want us to be “like him”. He wants to share his resurrection life with us. He doesn't want us to imitate him; instead, Christ, the unspeakable Gift, wants to live in and through us ... Jesus works all the way down and through until, as Paul puts it, “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” It should be said of you, “In (insert your name) something of Christ lives. The story continues in his/her/their life.” The good news is as scary as it is good. It is safe to be “like” Jesus; it is scary to “be” and “do” Jesus.**

— SWEET & VIOLA

💬 Do you agree with the last line of the quote? Explain your answer.

💬 Does the above quote describe following Jesus in a different way from what you have heard before? If so, how? What do you think about it?

💬 In what ways have you found that you can imitate Jesus? In what ways have you found that you can't?

💬 Do you feel the love of Jesus within you? How, or why not?

💬 Do you feel the power of Jesus within you? How, or why not?

In Galatians we read:

'The life you see me living is not “mine”, but it is lived by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'

— (GALATIANS 2:20 MSG)

Once we are truly sharing our lives with Jesus and learning to live in his love, our daily behaviour changes in a way where we deeply desire to honour and please him: the living Jesus within us. His love overwhelms us and

banishes our fears, his Spirit directs and comforts us, his power empowers and energises us. We are living in Christ's love and allowing Christ's love to live in us. This is what it means to be doing life together with Jesus.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

To bring your thoughts together, write down an answer to the following question and share it with the group.

 What does 'doing life together with Jesus' mean for you?

WITNESS

Watch the clip together. As you watch, jot down any points that interest you.


 **Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus – Spoken Word (4:03)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IAhDGYlpqY>


ASK


- * What points does the clip make about 'doing life with Jesus'?
- * In what ways are we good at criticising others for the way they are living for Jesus?
- * Do you think we apply the same standards to our own faith journey? If not, why not?
- * In what ways could you show more grace to those who may have misunderstood what it means to 'do life with Jesus'?
- * In what ways do we focus on external expressions of our faith?

Reflect on all we have discussed so far in the session.

 How does it challenge you to 'do life with Jesus' differently?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

 How much focus do you place on the way others are 'doing life with Jesus' compared to yourself?

 In what way does that need to change?

WORSHIP

Please keep safe and follow all health and safety procedures during this next activity. Battery operated tealights can be used as an alternative.

Light a large central candle representing Jesus, the Light of the World. Give each person a nightlight/tealight and ask them to light it from the Christ candle (with a taper). Ask Jesus to light up their lives. They can place it wherever they want it to be in relation to the Christ candle. The group does this in silence and then spends a few minutes in reflection and prayer. As they reflect, ask them to think of Jesus in and around them; to allow Jesus to love and heal them; to submit to Jesus any areas of their life they have been holding back; to experience the power of his Holy Spirit.

The following song can be used alongside the time of reflection.

 **Charity Gayle – I Speak Jesus (feat. Steven Musso) (7:46)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PcmqSfr1ENY>

THE PURPOSE OF JESUS

In today's session we'll spend time thinking about the purpose and mission of Jesus. We'll also consider how the purpose of Jesus impacts our lives, the decisions we make, and the way we worship.

WELCOME

Today we're thinking about purpose. Have a look at these amazing inventions. Discuss the purpose of each invention and why you think it was created.

25 TRULY USEFUL INVENTIONS THAT YOU NEVER KNEW YOU NEEDED

<https://www.boredpanda.com/useful-creative-inventions>

* If you could choose one of these inventions for your birthday, which one would it be? Explain your answer.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Finish this sentence:

'I wish someone would invent something that ...'

For example ... 'I wish someone would invent something that would write my homework for me.'

WORD

Give each member of the group a 'Purpose of Jesus' handout. Ask the group to explore each Bible reference and jot down what they discover about the purpose and mission of Jesus. You can either do this as a whole group and discuss the references, or work in smaller groups and feed back observations. The full references are shown below from the Amplified Translation to aid your discussion with the group.

BIBLE VERSES

¹⁸ 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me (the Messiah),
Because He has anointed Me to preach the good news to the poor.
He has sent Me to announce release (pardon, forgiveness) to the captives,
And recovery of sight to the blind,

To set free those who are oppressed (downtrodden, bruised, crushed by tragedy),

¹⁹ to proclaim the favourable year of the Lord [the day when salvation and the favour of God abound greatly].'

²⁰ Then He rolled up the scroll [having stopped in the middle of the verse], gave it back to the attendant and sat down [to teach]; and the eyes of all those in the synagogue were [attentively] fixed on Him. ²¹ He began speaking to them: 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing and in your presence.'

— LUKE 4:18-21 (AMP)

²⁶ 'It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant,
²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your [willing and humble] slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many [paying the price to set them free from the penalty of sin].'

— MATTHEW 20:28 (AMP)

⁹ Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this household, because he, too, is a [spiritual] son of Abraham; ¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'

— LUKE 19:9-10 (AMP)

¹⁷ ‘For God did not send the Son into the world to judge and condemn the world [that is, to initiate the final judgement of the world], but that the world might be saved through Him.’

— JOHN 3:17 (AMP)

³⁸ ‘For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but to do the will of Him who sent Me.
³⁹ This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but that I [give new life and] raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is My Father’s will and purpose, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him [as Saviour] will have eternal life, and I will raise him up [from the dead] on the last day.’

— JOHN 6:38-40 (AMP)

¹⁰ ‘The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows].’

— JOHN 10:10 (AMP)

⁴⁶ ‘I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes and trusts in Me [as Saviour – all those who anchor their hope in Me and rely on the truth of My message] will not continue to live in darkness.’

— JOHN 12:46 (AMP)

¹³ ‘Go and learn what this [Scripture] means: “I desire compassion [for those in distress], and not [animal] sacrifice,” for I did not come to call [to repentance] the [self-proclaimed] righteous [who see no need to change], but sinners [those who recognise their sin and actively seek forgiveness].’

— MATTHEW 9:13 (AMP)

Once the Bible references have been explored, ask the group to summarise the purpose and mission of Jesus and write their thoughts in the box at the bottom of the handout.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

What is your response to the following quote?

“The purpose of God isn’t to save us from Hell. The purpose of God is to make us like Christ.”

— AW TOZER

WITNESS

In last week’s session we discussed what it means when Jesus lives within us.

As you reflect on the purpose and mission of Jesus, ask:

- * How does this impact your understanding of doing life with Jesus?
- * Where do you see the purpose and mission of Jesus lived out in the world today?
- * How can you personally, or as a group, get involved in this?
- * From your reading of Jesus, how did he respond to the poor? The weak? The lonely? Those that didn’t fit in?
- * How do you personally respond to people such as these?
- * How does your family/church respond to people such as these?
- * In what ways do you feel compassion for the things that Jesus is compassionate about?
- * Do you think you feel pain over the same things that Jesus feels pain over?
- * Do you feel joy and happiness in the same things that Jesus does?

Using the back of your handout, take time to summarise your own purpose and mission, ensuring that it is in line with Jesus' example. Share it with the rest of the group.




WORSHIP

We have spent the past few weeks focusing on Jesus.

Learning about Jesus and discussing how we can do life with him is valuable, but it needs to be reflected in our worship of him.

Watch this clip where Francis Chan challenges us to think about the way we worship Jesus.

 **Francis Chan – The Obsession of the Devoted Worshipper**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BQM1LtyugA>

-  What are the key points that Francis Chan is making?
-  What one challenge will you personally take away from this clip?
-  How will it impact the way you worship Jesus going forward?

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY

Share together in a time of sung worship and reflection as you focus on the purpose and mission of Jesus.

 **Chris Tomlin – Jesus (Lyrics and Chords) (4:06)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEbQswNB6Wc>