

Walk in Truth and Love



2 John 1-6; 1 John 4:1-4



John writes to a church known for its love and hospitality, reminding them that love and truth must always move together. This session explores what it means to stay loving and wise when truth is tested. We'll learn how to listen carefully, hold tightly to Jesus and walk with confidence in both truth and love.

You will need:

- Paper and pens/pencils
- 'Walk in Truth and Love' handout



Beat

Leader's notes:

Today's Bassline starts with a seemingly straightforward game of 'True or False'. Work through each statement allowing the young people time to guess and then revealing the answer before going on to the next question. The statement 'The Bible was the first book ever printed' is listed as true, because it is a widely held belief. Some of the group may challenge this or they may just accept the answer. After the quiz you'll reveal that it isn't quite right. This will set up the idea that some things sound true because we've heard them often, but they don't tell the full story.

True or False

1. Bananas grow on trees. **False** – bananas grow on plants.
2. Honey never spoils or goes off. **True** – archaeologists have found honey around 3,000 years old that's still edible.
3. The Bible was the first book ever printed. **True** – the Gutenberg Bible, printed around 1455, is widely known as the first major book ever printed.
4. Goldfish only have a three-second memory. **False** – they can remember for months.
5. There's a museum dedicated entirely to bad art. **True** – it's in Massachusetts in the USA.
6. Sloths can hold their breath longer than dolphins. **True** – sloths can hold their breath for up to 40 minutes, whereas most dolphins can manage 8-10 minutes.

Leader's notes:

Explain to the group that one of the 'true' statements isn't actually true. Ask them which one they think it is and then clarify whether the Bible really was the first book ever printed. Printing existed in China centuries before the printing press was invented in Europe. The Gutenberg Bible (around 1455) was the first major book printed using mechanical printing, but it wasn't the first printed book in history.

Say:

The statement about the Bible sounded true because it has been repeated often enough through the centuries. Once we looked a little closer we discovered that it wasn't quite right. John's letter was written to a church who listened to teaching that sounded right but questioned whether he was truly both human and divine. Today we'll explore how John encourages us to speak out when we hear teaching that does not reflect the truth of Jesus.

Bridge

Ask:

What is your response to the following quote?

'A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting its boots on.'

— Mark Twain

Say:

This quote is often credited to Mark Twain, but QI and other researchers have found no record of him ever saying it. A version of the phrase appears as early as the 1700s, over a hundred years before Twain was born. The quote is a great example of how easy it is for the truth to get lost or changed along the way.

Amplify

Say:

At the start of this series we learned about the 'real' Jesus, the Son of God who entered our world, who could be seen, heard and touched. John reminded us that faith isn't about hidden secrets or special knowledge but about the truth already revealed through Jesus.

Ask:

- Why do you think John cared so much about helping people recognise what was real about Jesus?

- What difference does it make to know that our faith is based on eyewitness truth, not mystery or myth?

Say:

By the time John writes his second letter, some of that truth is starting to be twisted. Travelling teachers were visiting the churches claiming new revelation and deeper insight, but their message didn't reflect the truth of Jesus and who he is. They were changing the story, saying that Jesus wasn't really a human person, only divine.

Ask:

- Does this kind of distortion happen today?
- Share some examples where ideas sound spiritual but actually move away from who Jesus really is.

Say:

John writes the short letter known to us as 2 John to protect a local church, which he affectionately calls 'the lady and her children'. Most Bible scholars believe this is a way of describing a church family and its members. John's goal is simple: to help this church stay true to Jesus while following the command to love others.

Read:

¹ **The elder,**

To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth – and not I only, but also all who know the truth – ² because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us for ever:

³ **Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son, will be with us in truth and love.**

⁴ **It has given me great joy to find some of your children walking in the truth, just as the Father commanded us. ⁵ And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.**

– (2 John: 1–6)

Ask:

- What ideas from 1 John do you hear looped again in 2 John?
- What's new or different in how John talks about truth and love?

Say:

John praises this young church for walking in the truth, but he reminds them that truth and love must move together. Love isn't just a feeling – it's seen in the actions that show our obedience to God. In contrast, truth isn't about rules or rigidity. Instead, it's what gives love direction and depth. When truth and love stay connected, the church reflects who God really is.

Moving into the final part of the letter, John shifts from encouragement to warning.

Read:

⁷ I say this because many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. ⁸ Watch out that you do not lose what we have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. ⁹ Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. ¹¹ Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

— (2 John 7–11)

Ask:

- Verse 7 starts with ‘I say this ...’ What has John just said in verses 1–6, and how does it shape the way we read these warnings?
- John’s main message is ‘love God and love one another’. How do these verses fit within that?

Say:

John isn’t telling believers to stop loving people, he’s reminding them to be wise about what they support and promote. Sometimes love means protecting others from ideas that distort who Jesus is.

This idea isn’t new. It loops back to a theme that we saw in 1 John 4.

Read:

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ² This is how you can recognise the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, ³ but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God.

— (1 John 4:1–3)

Ask:

- What does John mean when he says, ‘Test the spirits’?
- How might we ‘test’ ideas or teachings today to see if they line up with Jesus?

Leader’s notes:

The following points may help draw out discussion around these questions.

When John says to ‘Test the spirits’, he means weighing up what we hear or believe by comparing it with what we know about Jesus and what we read in God’s Word. We can compare any teaching to Scripture to see how it aligns with Jesus’ character and message.

Without being judgmental, we can also look at the life of the person sharing the message. We are not expecting perfection, but we can ask whether their life reflects the teaching of Jesus. We can think about the focus of what is being said and whether Jesus remains at the centre. Finally, we

can pray for guidance, asking the Holy Spirit to help us recognise what is real and true.

Say:

This passage helps us to see that John's warning in 2 John isn't about fear – it's about discernment. He wants the church to keep showing love, but also to stay alert to anyone that pulls people away from the truth of who Jesus really is.

Ask:

What do you think the word discernment means?

Say:

Discernment means learning to see clearly and choose wisely. It's about testing ideas, messages and influences to see if they reflect God's truth. John isn't telling believers to become suspicious or judgemental; instead, he's reminding them to think carefully about the voices they listen to.

Ask:

- What might this kind of testing look like for us today?
- Where do we hear messages about truth, success or identity that might not line up with the teachings of Jesus?

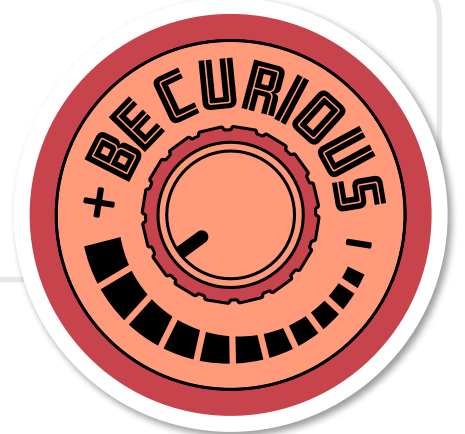
Say:

Love keeps our hearts open toward people and discernment keeps our faith anchored in truth. When both work together, we can show compassion without compromising the gospel of Jesus Christ.



Ask:

What difference does it make to know that God's Spirit helps us to discern what is real?



Sound Check

Say:

John's letter was written to a church who wanted to love well but also needed to guard the truth about Jesus. For our Sound Check today, we're going to place this dilemma in our own church.

Leader's notes:

Divide the group into smaller teams. Ask the young people to imagine that a youth group has come to their church to lead a special event or Sunday meeting. Each group will receive a different teaching point made by a member of the visiting youth group. Each teaching point sounds like it fits with the teachings of Jesus, but something isn't quite right.

Give each group a 'Walk in Truth and Love' handout . Allocate a teaching point to each group for them to focus on and then ask them to discuss the following questions.

1. Teaching Point: Love is All You Need

Jesus came to show us that love is all that really matters. As long as we love people and don't judge anyone, that's all God asks of us.

2. Teaching Point: Your Faith, Your Way

Everyone's journey with God looks different. What matters most is that your faith feels real to you. There's no single right way to follow Jesus. Whatever works for you is fine.

3. Teaching Point: Faith Without Doubt

True faith means never doubting God. If you have questions, it just means your faith isn't strong enough yet.

4. Teaching Point: All Roads Lead to God

Christians, Muslims, Hindus all worship the same God in different ways. God just wants us to be good people, whatever we believe.

5. Teaching Point: The Power of Positive Thinking

Faith is about believing that good things will happen. If you stay positive then God will bless you.

Discussion Questions:

- What sounds good or true in this statement?
- What Scripture verse or passage speaks truth to this statement?
- What is missing or distorted?
- How could you respond with truth and love to the member of the visiting youth group?
- What might it look like to correct someone kindly without being harsh or dismissive?

Leader's notes:

Bring the groups back together and ask them to share what they discussed and how they could respond in truth and love.



Bridge

Ask:

- When you notice someone sharing something about Jesus that doesn't sound true, what helps you respond with both honesty and kindness?
- Why do you think John wanted the church to handle these moments with love as well as truth?



Selah

Ask:

When you think about lovingly challenging false teaching, how does it make you feel?

Say:

It's natural to feel uncertain or even anxious when we sense we should speak up about something that doesn't sound right. John offers a reassuring reminder to believers who faced the same challenge.

Read:

4 You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

— (1 John 4:4)

Say:

John reminds us that we don't need to be afraid or feel we have to be clever enough to spot every lie. The Holy Spirit, the presence of Jesus living in us, is stronger than anything that tries to pull us away from the truth.

Ask:

- How could remembering that 'the one who is in you is greater' help you to walk in truth and love this week?

Leader's notes:

Reflecting on the discussion responses from the session, pray for the members of your youth group. Ask God to help each one of them walk in truth and love.



Say:

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

Ask:

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from this session about walking in truth and love?

Leader's notes:

Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.





Walk in Truth and Love

1

Teaching Point:

Love is All You Need

Jesus came to show us that love is all that really matters. As long as we love people and don't judge anyone, that's all God asks of us.

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Teaching Point:

Your Faith, Your Way

Everyone's journey with God looks different. What matters most is that your faith feels real to you. There's no single right way to follow Jesus. Whatever works for you is fine.

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Teaching Point:

Faith Without Doubt

True faith means never doubting God. If you have questions, it just means your faith isn't strong enough yet.

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Teaching Point:

All Roads Lead to God

Christians, Muslims, Hindus all worship the same God in different ways. God just wants us to be good people, whatever we believe.

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Teaching Point:

The Power of Positive Thinking

Faith is about believing that good things will happen. If you stay positive then God will bless you.

Discussion Questions:

- What sounds good or true in this statement?
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