

Identity



Luke 1 to 4



In this session the young people will explore how Luke introduces Jesus before his ministry takes shape. As they walk through Luke chapters 1 to 4, they will notice the promises, titles and affirmations spoken over Jesus by angels, Scripture and God himself. Together they will reflect on how Jesus' identity is named and affirmed before his teaching and miracles become widely known, and how this sets the direction for the rest of Luke's Gospel.

You will need:

- Paper and pens
- Two large sheets of flipchart paper and felt-tips
- Small squares of paper
- Glue sticks



Beat

Say:

Throughout this series we're going to explore the life of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. To get us started, we're going to do a quiz that covers the whole book. Don't worry if you don't know many of the answers yet. We'll come back to the same quiz in the final session, and by then you'll probably be surprised by how much of Luke's Gospel you know.

Leader's notes:

You can organise the group in whatever way works best for your setting. This could be done as a whole-group quiz, in small teams or individually. Reassure the group that this isn't a test and that guessing is absolutely fine.

The Gospel of Luke Quiz

1. Who was the Gospel of Luke written for?
 - a) Timothy
 - b) Theophilus**
 - c) Peter
2. At Jesus' baptism, what does the voice from Heaven say about him?
 - a) 'This is my anointed one'
 - b) 'You will lead my people'
 - c) 'You are my Son, whom I love'**
3. In Luke 5, what shocks people when Jesus heals the paralysed man?
 - a) He forgives his sins**
 - b) He heals him on the Sabbath
 - c) He touches him
4. When Jesus asks his disciples who they think he is, what does Peter say?
 - a) A great teacher
 - b) A prophet like Elijah
 - c) God's Messiah**
5. In Luke 9, what major decision does Jesus make about where he is going?
 - a) He returns to Galilee
 - b) He travels to Rome
 - c) He sets his face toward Jerusalem**
6. Which parable in Luke shows that outsiders are welcomed in God's Kingdom?
 - a) The Lost Coin
 - b) The Good Samaritan**
 - c) The Wise and Foolish Builders
7. How do the crowds respond when Jesus enters Jerusalem on Palm Sunday?
 - a) They welcome him as a teacher
 - b) They treat him with suspicion
 - c) They praise him as king**
8. What does Jesus do when he reaches the Temple?
 - a) He teaches the people
 - b) He confronts corruption**
 - c) He spends time praying alone

9. At the Last Supper, what does Jesus say the bread and wine represent?
- a) God's law and promises
 - b) His body and blood, given for others**
 - c) A sign of God's covenant with Israel
10. How does Jesus respond to violence when he is arrested?
- a) He tells his disciples to fight
 - b) He runs away
 - c) He refuses violence and heals his enemy**
11. Where do two disciples meet the risen Jesus without recognising him at first?
- a) In the Temple
 - b) On the road to Emmaus**
 - c) By the Sea of Galilee
12. How does Luke end his Gospel?
- a) With Jesus appearing to Thomas
 - b) With Jesus blessing his followers and ascending**
 - c) With the empty tomb



 **Bridge**

Ask:

Which stories or moments in the Gospel of Luke would you like to explore in more detail? What might help you do that in the coming week?

 **Amplify**

Read:

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye witnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

— (Luke 1:1-4)

Ask:

What do we discover about Luke's intentions as he writes his account of the life of Jesus?

Say:

Luke writes about things that have been fulfilled. He has listened to eye witnesses and carefully investigated what has taken place. He wants his reader to have certainty about what they have been taught. As we move through the first four chapters, we are going to notice how Luke shows that Jesus is the promised Messiah whose coming has long been prepared for.

Leader's notes:

Encourage the group to follow along in their Bibles. You will need a large sheet of paper and some pens. Ask one person to act as a scribe and write key words or phrases around the word 'Jesus' as they discuss the Scripture passages. The aim is for the group to explore the Scripture rather than have it read to them, but all relevant references are listed below for the leader.

Say:

Luke chapter one moves from the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth to Mary's encounter with the angel.

Ask:

Read Luke 1:31-33. What do we discover about Jesus in these verses?

³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants for ever; his kingdom will never end.

– (Luke 1:31-33)

Say:

Before Jesus is born, he is described as Son of the Most High and as a king whose kingdom will never end. Luke then tells the story of Jesus' birth.

Ask:

Luke 2 begins with the story of the birth of Jesus. Read Luke 2:10-11. What titles are given to Jesus in these verses?

¹⁰ But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

– (Luke 2:10-11)

ReadR

Luke 2:21 is a short verse, but what additional information does it give us about Jesus?

²¹ On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

– (Luke 2:21)

Say:

As Luke continues in chapter two, he tells us about Simeon meeting Jesus in the Temple. Simeon recognises something significant about this child.

Ask:

Read Luke 2:29–32. What does Simeon say Jesus has come to bring and who is it for?

²⁹ **‘Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.’**

– (Luke 2:29–32)

Say:

Here again we hear the language of promise and fulfilment. Jesus is described as salvation and as light, not only for Israel but also for all nations.

Luke then gives us a brief glimpse of Jesus as a 12-year-old in the Temple.

Ask:

Read Luke 2:49 and Luke 2:52. What do these verses show us about who Jesus is and how he lives?

⁴⁹ **‘Why were you searching for me?’ he asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’** ⁵⁰ **But they did not understand what he was saying to them.**

– (Luke 2:49)

⁵² **And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.**

– (Luke 2:52)

Say:

Even as a child, Jesus speaks of God as his Father.

Luke chapter three moves us into the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. John the Baptist prepares the way and then Jesus is baptised.

Ask:

Read Luke 3:21–22. What do we hear spoken over Jesus at this moment?

²¹ **When all the people were being baptised, Jesus was baptised too. And as he was praying, heaven was opened** ²² **and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: ‘You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.’**

– (Luke 3:21–22)

Say:

Before Jesus performs a miracle, before he gathers followers, God publicly names him as his beloved Son. His identity is affirmed before he proves anything. Luke wants us to see clearly who Jesus is before we see what he does.

Luke chapter four begins with Jesus in the wilderness and then takes us to Nazareth, where he reads from the prophet Isaiah.

Ask:

Read Luke 4:18-21. What does Jesus say about himself and his mission?

¹⁸ **'The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'
²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of
everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, 'Today
this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'**

— (Luke 4:18-21)

Say:

Across these four chapters, Luke repeats the same message in different ways. Jesus is promised, named, and affirmed before his ministry unfolds. Long before the crowds gather and miracles are performed, Luke leaves no doubt about who Jesus is.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

If someone only read Luke 1 to 4, how would they describe who Jesus is?

 **Sound Check****Say:**

We have spent time noticing the different words and phrases Luke uses to describe Jesus in the opening chapters of his Gospel. Before his ministry begins, Luke makes Jesus' identity clear.

Leader's notes:

Give each young person one or more small square pieces of paper and felt-tips. Keep the ideas from the Amplify section visible so they can refer back to them. The young people can choose an identity of Jesus to focus on and fill their piece of paper with colours, pictures or words linked to their choice. If there is time, then they can continue creating picture tiles based on the identity of Jesus.

Say:

Each tile represents one way Luke describes Jesus before his ministry has even commenced. On its own, it shows something important. Together, they form a fuller picture.

Leader's notes:

Invite each person to place their tile on to one large sheet of paper, building a single mosaic image. You may wish to write 'Jesus' at the top of the sheet beforehand.

Ask:

What does this mosaic show us about how Luke introduces Jesus?

 **Bridge****Ask:**

When you look at this mosaic, what do you understand more clearly about who Jesus is?

 **Selah****Say:**

We have spent time noticing how Luke introduces Jesus before his ministry begins. Before Jesus teaches, heals or gathers followers, Luke makes it clear who he is. Our mosaic reflects that layered identity.

We are going to listen to a song that echoes some of those same themes. As you listen, pay attention to the words and images that connect with what we have discovered today.

Leader's notes:

As the song plays, invite the young people to look at the completed mosaic. Encourage them to reflect quietly on the different ways Jesus has been described in Luke 1 to 4.

Watch:

Messiah – Francesca Battistelli (Official Lyric Video) (3:37)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=D14wXOK9XJQ

Optional Prayer:

Lord Jesus,
Thank you that Luke does not leave your identity uncertain.
Thank you that you are Messiah, Son, and Saviour.
Help us to see you clearly as we continue to discover more about you in Luke's Gospel.
Amen.

 **Coda**

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 that feels most significant about Jesus' identity before his ministry begins?

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.

