

Salvation



John 3:16; Romans 10:9; Romans 3:23 and selected verses from the Old and New Testaments



In this session the young people will explore the meaning of salvation and what it means to respond to what Jesus has done. Building on the truth that because he lives, the way back to God is open, they will begin to understand that salvation is not about earning our way back, but responding to God's invitation. Using the image of being lost and found, they will explore what it means to turn towards God, trust in Jesus and be made new by the Holy Spirit. As they reflect on their own lives, they will be encouraged to consider where they see themselves in this story and what it looks like to respond to God personally.

You will need:

- Paper and pens
- 'Salvation' handout



Beat

Leader's notes:

Divide the group into teams and ask them to create a list of films where the theme of the story is 'lost and found'. Give them a set amount of time and encourage them to think of as many as they can.

When the time is up, invite each team to share their ideas. Award a point for each film that clearly fits the theme. There may be some that are up for discussion but that is part of the fun.



Bridge

Ask:

Why do you think we are drawn to stories about being lost and found?

 **Amplify****Say:**

In today's session we're exploring the meaning of the word 'salvation'. It's a word that gets used a lot in church and is front and centre in the name of our denomination. However, it's not always clear what it means or why it matters.

We're going to start with a short clip that helps us begin to answer the question: What is salvation?

Watch:

What is Salvation? – Kids on the Move (5:03) Watch: 0:00-1:45

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tr-O4CXIM2M

Ask:

- Why did the little boy decide to go and explore Disneyland on his own?
- How did it feel at the beginning?
- What changed that took him from excitement to despair?
- Why couldn't he just fix it on his own?

Say:

At the start of his adventure, everything feels exciting. He is free and exploring the park in his own way, doing what he wants. As he wanders around, something suddenly changes – he realises that he is lost. Despite being surrounded by people, he feels totally alone. In that moment, being lost isn't just a feeling, it's a reality.

Ask:

What happened next? Did he find his grandma or did she find him?

Say:

The little boy doesn't find his way back on his own. His grandma comes to find him. She recognises that he is lost and goes looking for him. In that moment everything changes – not because of what he does, but because of what someone else does for him.

This helps us begin to understand what the Bible says about salvation. We don't simply find our own way back to God. God comes to us, and as we respond to him he brings us back into relationship with him.

Ask:

In last week's session we explored the meaning of atonement. How would you describe it?

Say:

Last week we saw that atonement is about what Jesus has done through his death and resurrection. Sin is dealt with and the way back to God is opened. The relationship that was broken is restored. In the clip, the little boy is lost, but a way back to his family exists. However,

having a way back to his family and actually being back with his family aren't the same thing. That's where salvation comes in.

Watch: 1:45- 5:03

Say:

At the beginning of the Bible we read about Adam and Eve. They were created to live in close relationship with God, but they chose to go their own way rather than trust him. In that moment, something changed. The relationship between God and humans was broken, and from that point on, people kept on choosing their own way instead of his.

The Salvation Army describes it like this:

'We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness.'

– (Doctrine 5)

However, this isn't just their story.

Ask:

In Romans 3:23, we read: '...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' In what ways do people still choose their own way instead of God's way?

Say:

The Bible is clear that all of us have, at some point, chosen our own way instead of God's way, and the result is always the same. That relationship with God is broken and we find ourselves separated from him.

The story doesn't end there, because God doesn't leave people lost and separated.

Read:

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

– (John 3:16)

Ask:

What does this verse tell us about God's character?

Say:

Out of love, God sends Jesus. Through his death and resurrection he deals with sin once and for all. This is what we explored last week when we looked at atonement – that through Jesus, the way back to God has been opened. However, having a way back isn't the same as being back, and that's where salvation comes in.

Read:

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

– (Romans 10:9)

Ask:

- According to this verse, what does someone need to do to be saved?
- What do you think it means to say 'Jesus is Lord' in your own life?
- What does it look like to believe in your heart, not just in your head?

Say:

In the clip, the little boy doesn't have to prove anything or earn his way back. He simply lets his grandma take him by the hand and bring him back to where he belongs.

In the same way, we are invited to trust God and allow him to bring us back into relationship with him. This is what salvation is. It is not us fixing things or earning our way back. Salvation is responding to what God has already done. It means turning away from our own way and trusting Jesus, putting him first in our lives.

Ask:

- If someone chooses to trust Jesus like this, what actually changes for them?
- Why do you think salvation is something we receive, rather than something we achieve?
- What do you think might stop someone from responding to God in this way?

Say:

Salvation is being brought back into relationship with God and made right with him. We are no longer separated. We are forgiven, accepted and brought into God's family. Because he lives, we are not lost any more. As we trust in him, we are brought home and welcomed into God's family.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

What do you think it looks like, in real life, to respond to God in the way we've just described?

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

Salvation is not just something we understand, it's something we respond to. We're going to take a closer look at how the Bible helps us understand what that response looks like.

Leader's notes:

Give each member of the group a 'Salvation' handout. Begin by reading Doctrine Seven together:

‘We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.’

In small groups, ask the young people to explore the Bible verses linked to each of the three key words: repentance, faith and regeneration. As they look at the passages, encourage them to talk about what each one shows them about salvation.

They can make notes or create simple pictures on the handout to help them explain what they are discovering. They don’t need to complete all of the sheet, as they can take it home to explore in more detail. Encourage the group to focus on two to three Bible references in each section.

Bring the group back together and invite them to share what they have found. Take time to draw out how the Bible helps us understand what each of these words mean.

Finally, encourage the young people to reflect on what this means for them personally by completing the sentence on the handout:

‘Because he lives, I ...’

The Bible passages are listed below for the leader’s use:

Repentance

¹⁴ If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

– 2 Chronicles 7:14

³⁸ Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

– (Acts 2:38)

⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

– (1 John 1:9)

¹⁹ Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

– (Acts 3:19)

Faith

¹ Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

– (Hebrews 11:1)

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

– (Ephesians 2:8–9)

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

– (Hebrews 11:6)

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

– (1 Peter 1:8–9)

Regeneration

³ Jesus replied, ‘Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.’

– (John 3:3)

⁴ But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, ⁷ so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

– (Titus 3:4–7)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!

– (2 Corinthians 5:17)

 **Bridge**

Ask:

Which aspect of salvation would you like to explore in more depth? Explain your choice.

 **Selah**

Say:

We’ve thought a lot today about what salvation means and what it looks like to respond to God. Think back to the clip we watched earlier and the picture of the little boy lost in Disneyland.

As we listen to this song, take a moment to reflect honestly.

Where do you see yourself in that story: lost, being found or being brought home?

Watch:

'O Come To The Altar' – Official Lyric Video – Elevation Worship (5:49)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OpfuKKH_SCE

Leader's notes:

Take a moment to pray with the group. You may also want to give the young people the opportunity to dedicate or rededicate their lives to Jesus.

 **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:

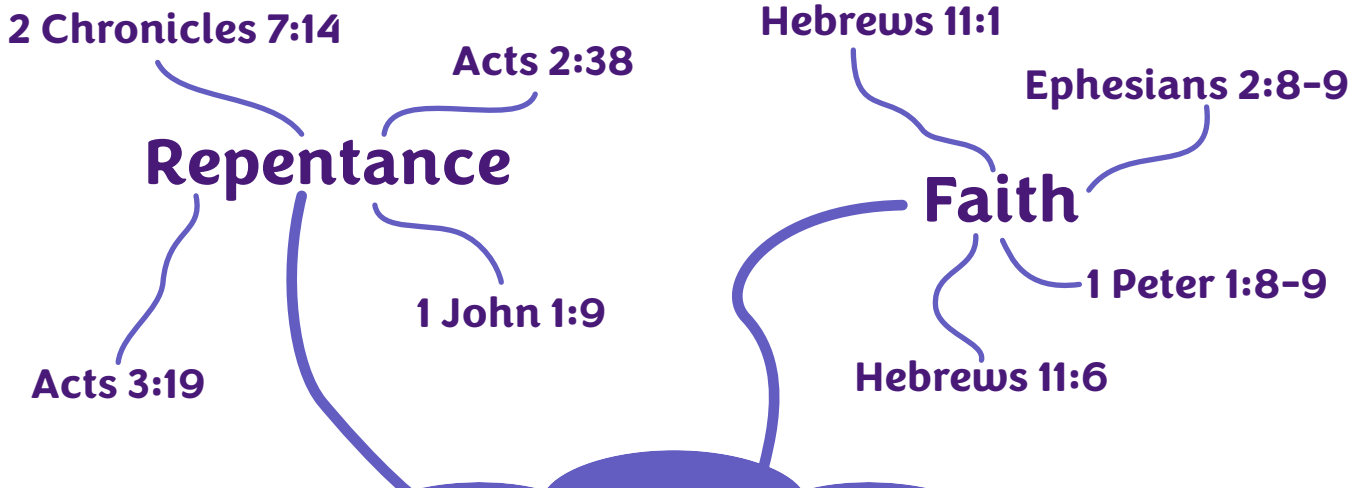
- As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?
- What is the one thing that you have discovered about salvation today?

Leader's notes:

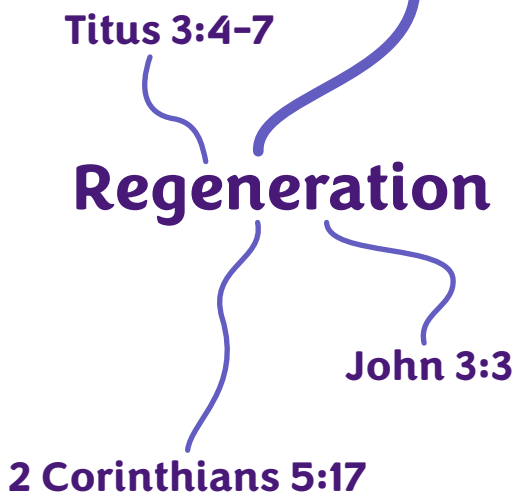
Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



Salvation



'We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.'



'Because he lives, I ...'