

Who is this man? - A Jesus quest



Introduction to this year's theme

This year there are two passages for each day. The first passage each day (with the exception of Day 3, Thursday) is one of the miracles Jesus performed and the second is one of His 'I am' sayings from John.

The first up front session of the morning will focus on and teach from a passage about a miracle. The miracle will be used to learn something about Jesus' identity each day from one of His 'I am' sayings, the second passage for the day.

Groups should focus on the miracle in the morning teaching and link the miracle to the 'I am' in the afternoon teaching session. Deep Blues will use the 'I am' saying as the main focus in their afternoon 'all together' sessions with opportunities to consider who Jesus is at a bit more depth than the morning sessions.

The memory verse or rather verses will build up from the 'I am' sayings.

A note on layout and headings used:

- **Aim:** This statement summarises what we want the children to understand each day. It's in adult language here and will need to be interpreted to fit the age of the children you are with but is provided to give us all a common teaching point to aim for.
- **False Lead!** An investigation can often throw up false leads, something that looks as though it will be helpful but turns out not to contribute to the big picture. A good investigator is willing to notice these false leads and not allow them to distract from the main aim of the quest. There are points when we could become detracted, diverted from the meaning of the passage and our teaching aim. Hopefully these notes will prevent too many false leads diverting us from the Jesus Quest - no picturesque routes this week!
- **Background material.** Every good investigator needs to know something about the customs, behaviour, beliefs, etc of the people or person he's investigating. The notes under these sections are there to give you, the Group leaders, some interesting bits of information - some will be more important to understanding the passage than others. They are intended for you mainly, to aid your understanding before you teach the children. Some may be suitable to use with your groups.
- The passages for each day are printed in full from the International Children's Bible. Please always use this version in your preparation for teaching the children so there is no confusion for them. [Where another version is quoted in these notes the version is included in brackets at the end of the quote.]
- Following the passages are some notes for you to use to help you 'get to grips' with the bible before you plan your times with the children. The self-explanatory headings are **Today's Miracle ...** and **Today's 'I am'...**
- Then you will find a list of the teaching resources that are included in your Resource pack. This gives an indication of when they could be useful and which age range they are likely to suit. Don't be constrained by these suggestions!

Miracles and 'I am'

To fully grasp the meaning and significance of the 'I am' statements made by Jesus it is necessary to think about those two little words themselves. They have a greater meaning than is immediately obvious.

When God told Moses he would lead the Israelites out of Egypt Moses was very uncertain about his ability. He wanted to know what to say to the Israelites and thought that, if he said to them the 'God of your fathers has sent me' they would ask what God's name was. Here is God's reply:

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "
Exodus 3:14 (NIV)

So God tells Moses his name is I AM. So by saying 'I am' Jesus is not just choosing convenient words, he is saying he is God. He is claiming to be God. Saying God's name was only done with great fear and much reverence at that time so we can be sure these sayings are important if Jesus risked the danger of openly saying he was God. In John 10 we read of how the Jews wanted to stone Jesus because he says 'I and the Father are one'. They see it as blasphemy because he claims to be God.

So the 'I am' sayings could begin 'God is'. It is through the 'I am' sayings that we can discover Jesus in this 'Jesus Quest'.

The miracles are intended to bring glory to God. They show God's power at work through Jesus. Jesus often uses a miracle, and the attention it attracts, to explain something about himself. The intention of the miracles is to lead people to faith by demonstrating the saving and healing power of God as his kingdom comes in.

At the end of his gospel John explains why he has included miracles in his gospel:

³⁰ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.
John 20:30-31(NIV)

False Lead!

The miracle passages will be very familiar. We must take care to still prepare fully. Try to come to the passage afresh and look at what it actually says rather than going on what you remember. Jesus used his miracles to point to truths about himself or the Father, let's be sure to use them in this way too. The miracles give great scope for visual aids and demonstrations. We need to be careful that the ones we choose to use make the meaning clear and don't focus on a side issue. Don't let the children go away thinking the miracles were a clever trick. Help them to realise Jesus really did these things that are impossible humanly speaking.

Open Door - Getting to know you:

Your group may consist of pairs of friends, children who know one another well and those who don't know anyone else. It is unlikely the whole group will know one another and you need to get to know them. As the children arrive on day one try to take time to speak to them individually asking their names and one or two other questions. On day one it's a good idea to use the Open Door time, and perhaps the first few minutes of the first teaching session, for ice-breaker games to help the children get to know one another and the Group leaders, assistants and any helpers. Some groups may need something like this at the start of each day.

The colouring sheets in the resource pack are also useful for this time as the children arrive one by one (some of the older children will still want to colour). On days 2 to 4 you may have things to complete from the day before but it is a good idea to always have some spare sheets, especially for the quieter children.

Resources are listed for each day as many follow the theme but there are also lists of ice-breakers, memory verse ideas, prayer suggestions at the end that could be used on any day. Some of these could be helpful if your group finish lunch quickly and are at a loose end.

Memory verse activity suggestions specific to that day's verse are grouped together each day (with general ones at the end of the Teaching material). They probably come better in the afternoon as part of 'Response' once the 'I am' saying has been covered 'up front' but you may want to use one for the previous day's memory verse when the children arrive in the morning to reinforce learning.

Memory verses:

Jesus said 'I am..

..the bread that gives life.' (John 6:35)	Day 1 - Tuesday
..the light of the world.' (John 8:12)	Day 2 - Wednesday
..the good shepherd.' (John 10:11)	Day 3 - Thursday
..the resurrection and the life.' (John 11:25)	Day 3 - Thursday
..the vine.' (John 15:5)	Day 4 - Friday

Teaching Material Team:

If you need further assistance in understanding these notes or the resource sheets do speak to one of the team:

Coordinator / notes:	Margaret Gingell	785981
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Day 1 - I am the bread that gives life

Miracle - Feeding of the five thousand - Mark 6:35-44

'I am' saying - John 6:25-35

Aim: Jesus satisfies more than physical hunger

Mark 6:35-44

³⁵It was now late in the day. Jesus' followers came to him and said, "No one lives in this place. And it is already very late. ³⁶Send the people away. They need to go to the farms and towns around here to buy some food to eat."

³⁷But Jesus answered, "You give them food to eat."

They said to him, "We can't buy enough bread to feed all these people! We would all have to work a month to earn enough money to buy that much bread!"

³⁸Jesus asked them, "How many loaves of bread do you have now? Go and see."

When they found out, they came to him and said, "We have five loaves and two fish."

³⁹Then Jesus said to the followers, "Tell all the people to sit in groups on the green grass."

⁴⁰So all the people sat in groups. They sat in groups of 50 or groups of 100. ⁴¹Jesus took the five loaves and two fish. He looked up to heaven and thanked God for the bread. He divided the bread and gave it to his followers for them to give to the people. Then he divided the two fish among them all. ⁴²All the people ate and were satisfied. ⁴³The followers filled 12 baskets with the pieces of bread and fish that were not eaten, ⁴⁴There were about 5,000 men there who ate.

John 6:25-35

²⁵The people found Jesus on the other side of the lake. They asked him, "Teacher, when did you come here?"

²⁶Jesus answered, "Are you looking for me because you saw me do miracles? No! I tell you the truth. You are looking for me because you ate the bread and were satisfied. ²⁷Earthly food spoils and ruins. So don't work to get that kind of food. But work to get the food that stays good always and gives you eternal life. The Son of Man will give you that food. God the Father has shown that he is with the Son of Man."

²⁸The people asked Jesus, "What are the things God wants us to do?"

²⁹Jesus answered, "The work God wants you to do is this: to believe in the One that God sent."

³⁰So the people asked, "What miracle will you do? If we can see a miracle, then we will believe you. What will you do? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the desert. This is written in the Scriptures: 'God gave them bread from heaven to eat'."

³²Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. Moses was not the one who gave you bread from heaven. But my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³God's bread is the One who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

³⁴The people said, "Sir, give us this bread always."

³⁵Then Jesus said, "I am the bread that gives life. He who comes to me will never be hungry. He who believes in me will never be thirsty,"

Today's Miracle - the feeding of the five thousand

Jesus and his Disciples had tried to go to a quiet place to rest, only to find the crowd got there before them. Jesus felt compassion for the crowd because 'they were like sheep without a shepherd'. So despite being tired and having had no time to eat anything he 'taught them many things'. When it got late the disciples started to worry because the people didn't live nearby, they wanted Jesus to send them away but Jesus told them to feed the crowd. Not surprisingly the disciples thought this was a stupid idea - they'd never be able to buy enough food for all these people to have even a morsel of bread. (In John's gospel it says it would need more than 8 month's wages, here it says 'they all' (number unknown) would need to work a month. The point is it's impossible!)

We can't explain away the miracle by, for example, saying Jesus and the Disciples shared their lunch. The passage says 'they all ate and were satisfied'. Thirteen packed lunches don't go that far! Jesus is God incarnate so it was no problem for Him to feed thousands of people with so little food.

God had promised that when the true shepherd came the desert would become a rich pasture where sheep would be gathered and fed (Ezekiel 34:23-31). Jesus here feasts with his followers in the desert - pointing forward to a wonderful future after the second coming when the desert will be a rich pasture, as well as back to manna in the desert.

Background detail:

- 🚩 V39 - The people sat in groups of 100s and 50s - this recalls the order of the Mosaic camp in the desert. The word translated groups means 'garden plots' - and they sat on green grass!
- 🚩 Jews regarded bread as a gift from God so they would always pick up any left over fragments. The baskets are small wicker baskets which were 'worn' as part of everyday attire. (Not the large laundry baskets of some illustrations in children's books).
- 🚩 Only men would have been counted as was the custom of that day - so many more than 5,000 were fed as women and children were likely to also have been present. Capernaum and Bethsaida had populations that were probably between 2,000 and 3,000 each!

False Lead!

Unlike John in his Gospel Mark doesn't mention that the loaves and fishes belonged to a boy. You may want to mention that as where they came from, especially with younger children, but beware of putting too much emphasis on the source of the food. Jesus is our focus. He is the one we are seeking in our Jesus Quest.

Today's 'I am'

John 6:14 tells us that the Galileans in the crowd fed by Jesus accepted him as '*the Prophet who is to come into the world*'. (This was more than most Jews had done so far.) When the Galileans realised he was a prophet like Moses who had fed the Israelites in the desert with manna which came down from the sky they wanted to seize Jesus and proclaim

him a king. It was too early in Jesus' ministry for anything like that to happen so he went away to a mountain by himself. John's gospel then recounts his walking on the water to join his disciples in the boat and they went to the other side of the lake. The next day the crowd realise Jesus and his disciples have gone and follow them to the other side of the lake. This is where our passage starts.

The crowd arrived hoping that Jesus would bring into being an earthly paradise - they had no thought of their spiritual needs. They thought Jesus had some magical power that would enable him to satisfy all men's physical needs. Jesus knew this was their thinking and urged them not to think of getting earthly food that perishes but food that will always be good and will give eternal life, the food that will satisfy their spiritual hunger. He points out that he, the Son of Man, can give that food (v27) and he has the Father's authority.



It's not surprising really that the reaction of the people is to ask what they can do to get that food. They'd not understood that eternal life is a gift Jesus can give and were thinking they could get it by doing 'good' things. Verse 29 holds the key fact that believing in Jesus is the only, and necessary, work God asks for.

The crowd want more proof, more miracles, they think back to Moses providing, as they see it, the manna in the desert for 40 years, to a nation not just 5,000 and want Jesus to prove he can continue providing, that it wasn't a 'one-off'. Jesus explains that Moses wasn't the provider of the manna and that God not only gave the manna but also has now sent the true bread from heaven - Jesus himself. Do note that God 'gives' this bread - present tense. He gives the true bread from heaven, eternal life, life through the Son.

Chapter 6 in John goes on to recount Jesus further teaching on the meaning and implication of the 'bread of life'. Please do find time to study that too as you prepare.

We want the children to understand that, whilst Jesus does care about us now and that God does provide for us now, does hear and answer prayer, the important reason for placing our trust in Jesus is that he will give us eternal life. That he satisfies much more than our physical hunger and needs in this life.

Background detail:

-  Son of Man - this is Jesus' most common title for himself. In Daniel chapter 7 the Son of Man is described in a passage on the end times as a heavenly figure who will be entrusted by God with authority, glory and sovereign power.
-  Manna - the 'bread' that God provided to feed the hungry Israelites for 40 years in the wanderings. Many Jews expected that, when God sent the Messiah, he would again send daily manna. The people needed to understand that the bread Jesus spoke of was much more important than the manna.

False Lead!

Don't spend too much time on Moses and manna with the children. It would be good for the older children to be told what they refer to as some may not be familiar with the bible but do leave enough time to concentrate on the 'bread of life'.

Resources for Day 1:

See end of Teaching Material for 'Getting to know you' suggestions.

Way in:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Follow my leader round the site, including the toilets		Y, R
Ball game - sit in circle with large clear ball, rolling to each child who writes their name on it in permanent pen. They can play with the ball at lunch time.		All
Colouring sheet - 'Jesus loves me'	1A	Y, R
Colouring sheet - 'Jesus feeds the crowd'	1B	Y, R
Decorating folder with memory verse, name labels, attractive stickers etc		All
Colouring Sheet - 'Jesus said "I am the bread that gives life"'	1C	R
Activity sheet - Spot the difference (2 per A4 page)	1D	R
<u>Following Jesus Game</u> Someone is nominated to play the part of Jesus and the children have to follow copying what he does. This could be skipping, hopping, jumping, giant steps, pigeon steps etc. This game could be used as a site tour with an adult leading or the children could take it in turns to lead.		R, G
<u>Picnic basket</u> Sit in a circle. Give each person the name of a food or drink. One person stands in the centre of the circle. Call out 2 items of food. Those people have to swap places while the person in the middle tries to get into their place. If you call "picnic basket" everyone has to move places.		G, B
<u>I have a loaf</u> Stand in a circle. One child walks round the outside of the circle, holding something round to represent a loaf (e.g. beanbag). Everyone says: I have a loaf to give a friend While the world is spinning Jesus' love will never end It's only just beginning! On the last "ing" the child with the loaf taps the nearest child on the back and gives them the loaf. They both run round the circle in opposite directions and the last one back becomes the one with the loaf.		G, B
<u>Bread tasting</u> Have a selection of different breads for the children to try (caution please - check out allergies first) including pitta, rye bread, tortilla, croissant etc from other countries.		B

Bible:

	Sheet:	Groups:
<u>Sniffing game</u> Either conceal some things that are 'smelly', using at least one fishy one, in a bag or blindfold children. Can they identify by smell alone?		Y
Read the story from a children's bible		Y
Prepare picnic beforehand using pitta bread and fish paste or fish sweets (Sainsbury's sell fizzy fish) offered in baskets (caution please - beware of allergies) to use in drama (can use basket template)	1E	Y
From magazines, let the children cut out pictures of bread and fish to use as above. (or use templates on Resource sheets)	1F, 1G, 1H, 1I	Y
Walking game (see sheet)	1J	Y
<u>Shaping string</u> Give each child a length of string and retell story making shapes with string e.g. loaf, fish, basket, child		Y
<u>Act out the story</u> Roles - Jesus, his followers and the crowd. Get the children to mime the story as you read from the Bible. Get the crowd to react to what they see happening. Real bread rolls could be used with paper fish.		R, G, B
<u>Game - Inside my Lunchbox</u> First child says "Inside my lunchbox I have....." adding an item of their choice. The next child repeats what the first child has said and then adds an item of their choice. As each child has a turn the list gets longer and harder to remember!		R, G, B
<u>Play Dough Loaves & Fish</u> Give each child a lump of play dough and get them to make a basket with five loaves and two fish. (Dough recipe on Resource Sheet)	1K	Y, R
Activity Sheet - Missing Numbers	1L	R
<u>Musical chairs</u> Have enough chairs for everyone in the group except one. Play just like musical chairs except the child that is still standing when the music stops has to say something he/she has learned from today's teaching. Don't take away anymore chairs - no-one is out.		G, B
Cost of 5,000 Happy Meals	1M	G, B

Response:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Response shout - see sheet	1O	Y, R
Using play dough, chat through main points (see Resource Sheet for recipe)	1K	Y, R
Have a small loaf/large roll and break it up into bite size pieces. Share it with the group. Would it be possible to feed everyone at Backpackers with it? Think about how big a crowd we have in the main tent at up front time. Jesus fed 10 times this many people with 5 loaves. He did it by using ordinary things. We are ordinary. Do we trust Jesus to use us? Do we trust Jesus to meet our needs?		
<u>Cutting a thousand pieces</u> This illustration works best if you have a pack of 5 Pitta bread. Take one pitta and cut it in half. Cut one half in half. Cut one of those halves in half. Make 10 cuts. You now have a piece of bread that's 1/1000 th of the whole pitta. The Resource Sheet gives the numbers - and reveals that if you cut every half up then you'd actually have 1,024 pieces. Even so the whole pack would not have gone to many more than the men in the crowd - and then it's only a crumb. Yet they all ate and were satisfied!	1P	G, B
<u>I went shopping</u> Sit in a circle. Leader says, "I went shopping and I bought a loaf of bread." The next person has to repeat the line and add on another item of food to the shopping list. This continues round the circle with each person having to remember a longer list. Afterwards talk about how bread is a basic food, which is usually at the top of everyone's shopping list. Getting to know Jesus should come top of our list for life.		

Memory Verse:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Make memory verse meal plaque (see sheet)	M1A	Y
Activity Sheet - Memory Verse (rearrange letters)	M1B	R, G
Activity sheet - Memory Verse (code)	M1C	R, G, B

Prayer:

[illegible]

Day 2 - I am the light of the world

Miracle - Healing of blind Bartimaeus - Mark 10:46-52

'I am' saying - John 8:12

Aim: Jesus gives the light which leads to life

Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶Then they came to the town of Jericho. As Jesus was leaving there with his followers and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus (son of Timaeus) was sitting by the road. ⁴⁷He heard that Jesus from Nazareth was walking by. The blind man cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, please help me!"

⁴⁸Many people scolded the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he shouted more and more, "Son of David please help me!"

⁴⁹Jesus stopped and said, "Tell the man to come here."

So they called the blind man. They said, "Cheer up! Get to your feet. Jesus is calling you." ⁵⁰The blind man stood up quickly. He left his coat there and went to Jesus,.

⁵¹Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The blind man answered; "Teacher, I want to see again."

⁵²Jesus said, "Go. You are healed because you believed." At once the man was able to see again, and he followed Jesus on the road.

John 8:12

¹²Later, Jesus talked to the people again. He said, "I am the light of the world. The person who follows me will never live in darkness"

Today's Miracle - the healing of blind Bartimaeus

The title 'Son of David' is a title used of the Messiah in the Old Testament. So it would seem that Bartimaeus had some idea of who Jesus was. He had probably heard of Jesus and how he was healing people and performing other miracles. His use of this title and his faith in asking to be able to see again seems to show that he wasn't spiritually blind and had some idea of who Jesus really was.

Did you notice verse 50? Bartimaeus stood up quickly - he was eager to go to Jesus - **and** he left his coat behind. That last little detail shows he was in a hurry and that Jesus was more important to him than his belongings. One commentary likened this to 'the garment of self-sufficiency' that, like a long garment, is a weight that, like that sin, gets in the way of our going to Jesus. Bartimaeus not only went to Jesus but he also, (verse 52), followed Jesus.

When our eyes are opened to who Jesus is we should be drawn to follow him, to want to know more of him and be willing to leave the old life behind.

Background Detail:

- ✚ A blind beggar just outside the city gates would have been a common sight on roads that led to Jerusalem.

False Lead!

Jesus said "You are healed because you believed". - He does not mean that Bartimaeus earned his healing by his belief. Jesus did the healing. It was Bartimaeus belief that made him turn to Jesus to be healed. Jesus healed him because of his belief.

Today's 'I am'

Jesus is speaking to explain his mission; he says he will give the light which is life itself to his followers. The darkness referred to is both the darkness of this world, where Jesus is not known, and that of Satan. God is light and Jesus is the light from God that lights the way for life, just as the pillar of fire lit the way for the Israelites in the desert.

Bartimaeus could not see physically but he had seen Jesus' light.

Some teaching that was very difficult for the Pharisees to understand follows this verse. Do read on yourself because it is not good just to look at one verse out of context but it is not necessary for the children to look at this detail where Jesus explains that his testimony is valid even though the Pharisees think he has not got the required two witnesses. Then there is very clear teaching that Jesus is the Son of God and that he will be going to heaven.

We want the children to understand that, Jesus opens the eyes of our spiritual understanding and guides us into the truth about ourselves and about what God has done to meet our most important needs.

Background detail:

- ✚ Jesus made this statement during his visit to Jerusalem for the festival of Tabernacles. His words were in keeping with the symbolism of the festival which remembered, by the lighting of the four golden candelabra at dusk, the Israelites being guided in their journey across the desert by a pillar of light (Exodus 13:21).

Resources for Day 2:

Way in:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Colouring sheet - 'Jesus said - "I am the light of the world"'	2A	Y, R, G
Colouring sheet - 'Bartimaeus and crowd'	2B	Y, R, G
Decorate cardboard specs with stickers and memory verse - see sheet	2C	All
Feely bags - children to guess articles in cloth bag		All
Praise dice -see sheet	2D	Y
Activity Sheet - Maze (2 per A4 page)	2E	Y, R, G
<u>Blindfold Activities</u> Try writing your name, drawing a snowman, tying a shoelace, filling a cup of water without being able to see.		R, G, B
<u>Broken eggs</u> Set up a sheet sprinkled with cornflakes a little way from your group. Blindfold all group members. Tell them you are going to guide them through a path of eggs and they must trust you to help them to avoid treading on the eggs. Guide each person in turn, but make sure they do tread on a cornflake or two. When they get across the sheet, let them watch the others. It's hilarious!		G, B
<u>Jigsaw</u> Get all the edge pieces of a smallish jigsaw and give each person a few pieces. Give them 3 minutes to complete the jigsaw. After the 3 minutes ask them what they think it is a picture of (they should not be able to tell you!) Explain that although the outside may look finished, the inside needs work for the whole picture to be revealed. Today's story will show us how Jesus healed a man so that he became completely whole.		G, B

Bible:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Read from children's bible		Y
Blindfold a child and ask him to guess the other children by feeling or listening		Y
Retell the story using string shapes		Y
Praise dice (see sheet)	2D	Y
<u>Story</u> Get the children to work in two groups. Children take on the roles of - narrator, crowd, Jesus and Bartimaeus and read the story from the Bible. (The narrators part could be split for two children to read)		R, G, B
<u>Hot Seat</u> Ask for volunteers to role play Bartimaeus, a disciple, a member of the crowd and a religious leader. The other members of the group should ask them questions about how they feel about the events in the story.		G, B
Picture strip & background - show how Bartimaeus because of Jesus	2Fa, 2Fb	R, G, B

Response:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Stained glass window pictures using - see sheet	2G	All
Wax painting - draw picture using crayons then wash over with thin paint		Y, R
Light of the world picture see sheet. Photocopy onto acetate sheet and colour in using either acetate pens or tissue paper glued on.	2H	All
Talk about blind people today and guide dogs		All
<u>Blindfold Game</u> The children are blindfolded in turn and given an item to identify by touch and maybe smell. Fruit or vegetables could be used. The more adventurous may also like to use the sense of taste but great attention should be paid to any allergies the children may have.		R,G,B
Activity Sheet - Crossword	2I	R,G,B

Memory Verse:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Activity Sheet - Memory Verse (code) (2 per A4 sheet)	M2A	R, G, B
<u>Candle Book Mark with Memory Verse</u> (3 per A4 page) Cut out a candle shape (as shown) in card for each child and punch a single hole at the top. The children colour in the memory verse and then tie flame coloured wool through the hole.	M2B	All
Activity sheet - Memory Verse (rearrange letters)	M2C	R, G

Prayer:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Add item to prayer banner, perhaps a candle with words "Jesus shows me the way to live".		All
<u>Prayer Banner</u> Day 2 - Candle shaped prayers	P1B	All

Day 3 – I am the good shepherd

[and I am the resurrection and the life]

Miracle – Jesus' Resurrection John 10:11-18 (I am the good shepherd)

'I am' saying – John 11:25 (I am the resurrection and the life)

Aim: Jesus willingly gives his life (and takes it back) so we can have new, eternal, spiritual life

John 10:11-18

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. ¹²The worker who is paid to keep the sheep is different from the shepherd who owns them. So when the worker sees a wolf coming, he runs away and leaves the sheep alone. Then the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The man runs away because he is only a paid worker. He does not really care for the sheep.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵"I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep, as the Father knows me. And my sheep know me, as I know the Father. I give my life for the sheep. ¹⁶I have other sheep that are not in this flock here. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷The Father loves me because I give my life. I give my life so that I can take it back again. ¹⁸No one takes it away from me. I give my own life freely. I have the right to give my life, and I have the right to take it back. This is what my Father commanded me to do."

John 11:25

²⁵Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will have life even if he dies."

Note about today's teaching

There are 2 'I am' passages today, the first points to the crucifixion and the resurrection, the second to the resurrection and eternal life. We want to focus on the resurrection mainly today. With some of the older groups you may want to read one of the resurrection passages (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 or John 20).

Today's 'I am' – 1 'I am the good shepherd'

Jesus has been using the imagery of the shepherd, flock, sheepfold and now continues by saying 'I am the **good** shepherd'. Shepherds often had to face danger to keep their sheep safe from wild animals but Jesus goes on to say he **gives** his **life** for the sake of his sheep.

He has made clear claims to being the Messiah, being God, which will be repeated shortly (John 10:22-39). So when he claims to be the shepherd he is claiming that the Messiah has come and in him God himself has come to shepherd his people.

The good shepherd's actions contrast with the 'paid worker' who cares for his life more than he does the sheep.

When it says 'I know my sheep' in verse 4 that is referring to a deep knowledge of one another as with the Father and the Son; so not only does Jesus know us well, we are able

to know him deeply. Jesus goes on to say that there will be other sheep, that is, those who are not Jews, who will hear and know his voice and obey him.

The second part of verse 17 and verse 18 are important because it is made clear that Jesus gave his life freely, he wasn't forced to die. It also makes it clear that he has the right to take his life up again. He **gives** his life **freely** and he **has the right to take it up again**. This clearly points forward to both the crucifixion and the resurrection. God the Father did not force Jesus to go to the cross. It was the Father's will but the important thing is the Son, Jesus, went willingly. Jesus was killed on the cross by men but only because Jesus went willingly.

Background Detail:

- ✚ In the Old Testament, the leaders of the people are called shepherds, especially Moses (Ps 77:20) and David. God is **the** shepherd - better than all the rest and the coming Messiah will be God's shepherd for his flock (Ezekiel 34:23-24).
- ✚ *good (kalos)* - refers in this sort of context to that which is beautiful, noble, honourable, worthy of praise
- ✚ several flocks would be kept in one sheep pen overnight with a watchman on the gate. In the morning the shepherd of each flock would arrive for his sheep, be recognised by the doorman and call his sheep, either with a distinctive call or whistle, perhaps using a small flute. Some shepherds also gave their sheep names.

False Lead!

Verse 17 can seem to imply that the reason the Father loves the Son because of the Son's obedience. Jesus is dependent on the Father and (v18) he obeys his Father's commands. Elsewhere (John 17:24) it is clearly stated that the father loved the Son from the beginning. (There are other passages that support this). Also John 3:16 tells us how much God loves the world. The world is not obedient! So God's love is not dependent on obedience.

Today's Miracle and 'I am' - 2 'I am the resurrection and the life'

This is more than Jesus saying he gives resurrection and life, the 'I am' shows they are identified with him. He is life; so a final death is impossible for him. The exciting thing is that he can give that life to anyone who follows him, any true believer. Believers will have to die, Jesus had to die too, but believers are promised eternal life beyond death. The life that comes through believing in Jesus starts now and is not interrupted by physical death.

Jesus taught about his resurrection elsewhere as well:

He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.

Mark 8:31

He also taught about resurrection and judgement for all e.g. the sheep and the goats.

So why is the resurrection important? It made clear Jesus' claims to be the Son of God were true and it demonstrated God's power at work. It offers us hope of an eternal

future in God's presence as well as encouraging us to live the life Jesus wants since we have that hope.

We want the children to be aware of Jesus' resurrection today and what it means. We want the children to understand that, Jesus cares deeply for them, loves them, they can follow him and he will give them eternal life. We want them to know that, although he died on the cross, he rose again and is alive now. Depending on your group, what knowledge they have, and what has been said 'up front', you may need to spend some time explaining the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Background Detail:

- ✚ Jesus is talking to Martha; she has said to him that Lazarus would not have died had Jesus been there. You may want to remind any children that were at Backpackers last year that we thought about Lazarus and how Jesus raised him from the dead last year.
- ✚ If you have access to the 'New Lion Handbook to the Bible' do read, as part of your preparation, the article on Jesus' Resurrection by David Wheaton. It is important that the children grasp this was real event, a miracle, no trickery. If you have someone in your group with lots of questions do remember you can make use of the Encouragers so that you are not focusing on one or two of your group while the rest of the children don't really follow the discussion.
- ✚ The evidence for the resurrection includes the empty tomb, the missing body, the risen Jesus (After his resurrection Jesus appeared to many different people over a period of 40 days before ascending into heaven.) and the difference in the disciples - read Acts chapter 2.

False Lead!

There is no mention of repentance in either of the two passages today but it will need to be made clear to the children that they do need to say sorry to God for ignoring him, for putting themselves first and not behaving as he would like them to. There may be enough said in the up-front sessions and there is another opportunity tomorrow, but do help your group to understand this is part of putting their trust in Jesus and following him.

Resources for Day 3:

Way in:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Colouring sheet	3A	Y, R
Make play dough models of sheep and pen and shepherd ready for story time (see Resource Sheet for recipe)	1K	Y, R
Decorate crosses		All
Colouring Sheet	3B	R, G
Activity Sheet - Maze (2 per A4 page)	3C	Y, R, G
<u>Who is knocking at the door?</u> Stand the children in a circle with one child blindfolded in the centre. The children join hands and walk round in a clockwise direction chanting: "One, two, three, four, who is knocking at the door?" Say the rhyme twice then stop. The person who is standing opposite the person in the middle says "Who is knocking at the door?". The person in the middle has to guess their identity. If successful, change places. Link later to sheep recognising shepherd's voice.		R, G, B
<u>Obstacle race</u> If you can use outdoor space, make an obstacle course using chairs, string etc, which will require children to go under, over, round. One child is the shepherd, the rest are sheep. Sheep are blindfolded and must hold hands. Explain their shepherd will guide them. For younger ones, a leader should be the shepherd. For older ones, divide into 2 groups and allow one shepherd to touch and talk to the sheep to guide them. For the other group, only allow the shepherd to stand at the side and call instructions. Afterwards decide which shepherd was easiest to follow.		R, G, B
<u>Sheep, sheep, wolf</u> (aka duck, duck, goose) Children sit in a circle. One child walks around circle patting each child on the head saying "sheep, sheep, sheep..." as if counting. When they say "wolf" instead, "wolf" chases them around the circle back to "wolf's" old place. Whoever sits down last becomes the caller.		G, B
<u>Catch the sheep</u> 1 child is the wolf, the rest are sheep. Designate an area, which is the fold. The wolf has to catch the rest before they get to the fold. When caught help to catch others. OR Take it in turns to be the wolf. See how many sheep the wolf can catch in 30 seconds.		G, B

Story:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Read story from children's bible then retell using play dough characters	1K	Y
Act out Resurrection story using pop-up tent for tomb		Y
Using paper plates, make a play dough garden scene with empty tomb and decorate with flowers	1K	Y, R

Retell the story using string		All
Play with parachute just to celebrate life		Y, R
Make sheep masks - see sheet	3D	Y
<u>Act out the story</u> Roles - Jesus, paid worker, wolf, sheep, sheep outside flock. Get the children to mime the story as you read from the Bible.		R, G, B
Activity Sheet - Missing Words (2 per A4 page)	3E	R, G
<u>Ladders</u> Children get in pairs & sit opposite partner with feet touching to make a ladder effect. Name each pair "shepherd", "wolf". "worker", "flock", "Father". Read the bible passage. When they hear their name said they run up the centre of the ladder, round the outside & back up to their place. When the word sheep is said, everyone runs.		G, B
Retell the story using sheep model	3F	Y, R, G

Response:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Talk about having pets and looking after them		All
Talk about the things children take to bed for comfort and reassurance, assure them that Jesus is with them all the time		Y, R
<u>Wax crayon picture</u> Draw a picture with a wax crayon, then wash some thin paint over it to highlight it.		Y, R, G
Activity Sheet - 'Jesus said "I am the Good Shepherd"'	3G	R, G, B
Colouring sheet - 'The Resurrection'	3H	Y, R
Colouring Sheet - 'The Resurrected Jesus and women'	3I	Y, R, G

Memory Verse:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Activity Sheet - Memory Verse (code) (one per A4 page today!)	M3A	R, G, B
Activity sheet - Memory Verse (rearrange letters) (2 per A4 page)	M3B	R,G
<u>Sheep Book Mark with Memory Verse</u> (2 per A4 page) Cut out a sheep shape (as shown) in card for each child and punch holes around the edge. Cut some sheep coloured wool into pieces long enough to thread through the holes. Get the children to thread the wool through the holes starting and finishing at the tail end. Tie the ends together to form a tail. (Instead of using needles wrap a piece of masking tape around the end of each piece of wool to make it easier to thread)	M3C	All

Prayer:

	Sheet:	Groups:
<u>Prayer Banner</u> - Day 3 : Sheep shaped prayers	P3A	All
Add item banner using sheep photocopies with words "Jesus is with me always".	P3A, P3B	All
Sheep shape for prayer	P1C	All

Day 4 – I am the true vine

Main passage – Water into Wine – John 2:1-11

'I am' saying – John 15:1-8

Aim: Jesus changes people, they will be fruitful if they remain in him.

John 2:1-11

¹Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. ²Jesus and his followers were also invited to the wedding. ³When all the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴Jesus answered, "Dear woman, why come to me? My time has not yet come."

⁵His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you to do." ⁶In that place there were six stone water jars. The Jews used jars like these in their washing ceremony. Each jar held about 100 litres.

⁷Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water." So they filled the jars to the top.

⁸Then he said to them, "Now take some out and give it to the master of the feast."

So the servants took the water to the master. ⁹When he tasted it, the water, had become wine. He did not know where the wine came from. But the servants who brought the water knew. The master of the wedding called the bridegroom ¹⁰and said to him, "People always serve the best wine first. Later, after the guests have been drinking a lot, they serve the cheaper wine. But you have saved the best wine till now."

¹¹So in Cana of Galilee, Jesus did his first miracle. There he showed his glory, and his followers believed in him.

John 15:1-8

¹"I am the true vine; my Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. And he trims and cleans every branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. ³You are already clean because of the words I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can produce fruit alone. It must remain in the vine. It is the same with you. You cannot produce fruit alone. You must remain in me.

⁵"I am the vine, and you are the branches. If a person remains in me and I remain in him, then he produces much fruit. But without me he can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not remain in me, then he is like a branch that is thrown away. That branch dies. People pick up dead branches, throw them into the fire, and burn them. ⁷Remain in me and follow my teachings. If you do this, then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given to you. ⁸You should produce much fruit and show that you are my followers. This brings glory to my Father.

Today's' Miracle


This is the first miracle recorded in John. Notice that Mary does not tell Jesus what to do. No-one has the right to tell Jesus or God the Father what to do. Mary merely states the problem. She does expect Jesus to act though, as her words to the servants show. Jesus asks her why she's come to him, because his time has not yet come. He is telling her

that her concerns are not the same as his. She is concerned about the lack of wine and the embarrassment that it will cause but his concerns are for what humans lack that they desperately need.

Jesus will take action but in his own way, for his own reasons and in his own time. He did not perform this miracle, or any other, just to satisfy men's physical needs or contribute to their happiness. As with all other miracles it was a sign. It is not clearly pointed out in the bible but we can infer that turning water into wine gave a symbol, in that it was lavishly and freely provided, of the full and free salvation that was to be provided by his death. The 'Master of Ceremonies' didn't understand, he was just puzzled that the best had been kept until last, but verse 11 tells us that Jesus 'showed his glory'. The miracles are all intended to give glory to God and to point to who Jesus is. Verse 11 tells us that and that 'his followers believed in him'. They understood the significance of what had happened.

The link between today's miracle and 'I am' is a bit more tenuous than the others. Wine is made from grapes which are a fruit but...! There is more than that though, so read on.

Background Detail:

-  Wedding festivities normally lasted for about a week and the family were obliged to provide an appropriate feast. People only drank water or wine, there wasn't a huge variety of other drinks. The bridegroom, who provided the wine, would have been highly embarrassed when it ran out.

False Lead!

Don't think of this as a lesser miracle because there is no healing involved and providing wine can seem a bit frivolous and not that serious a need. The miracles were not intended to only relieve human distress and nothing else; they were intended to display the glory of Jesus and point to the wonder of his redeeming love.

Today's 'I am'

This is the final 'I am' saying of Jesus before his death and resurrection. He is teaching his disciples about the demands of a life following him.

In the Old Testament the imagery of Israel as the vine is often used. God brought this vine out of Egypt and planted it in a new land. Israel often failed to live up to expectations though but Jesus is the perfect vine. Jesus' description of himself as the 'true vine' highlights this contrast.

Believers in Jesus are in a very close relationship with him just as the branches are to the vine (see Background detail). There is a need for constant 'cleansing' if a believer is to continue enjoying the eternal life which Jesus offers. The branches of a vine are not self-centred or independent. Their life is drawn from the stem of the vine to which they belong. Pruning brings them back closer to that stem. Believers must take spiritual strength from Jesus and accept that there is a discipline that is necessary.

When a believer relies completely and constantly on Jesus, then, Jesus lives in them (Galatians 2:20). So verse 7 tells us that if Christ is in us and we follow his teachings then we can pray for anything, ask for anything. This is because that closeness to Christ will bring us to pray for things that are within his will - the things he would pray for.

The main aim of our producing fruit though is given in verse 8 - and this is where we clearly see the strong link to Today's Miracle - the main aim is to bring glory to God the Father. A minor link is that Mary knew she could tell Jesus of her concern just as we can bring our concerns to him in prayer.

When we closely follow Jesus, when we follow his teachings as best we can, when we show love to others because Jesus first loved us, then we will produce fruit, then people will see how wonderful God is, then they will be attracted to him.

We want the children to understand that following Jesus is a continuing thing. We need to take care that we stay following him, that we try to live the life he wants us to. That we learn about him, learn what he taught and how he wants us to behave. It should be clear that we are followers of Jesus by the way we live and our actions (our fruit). We will need to repent, be sorry for, the times we put ourselves at the centre of our lives and not Jesus. - When we don't remain in him and try to ignore him in us. That is when God carries out the trimming and cleaning of verse 2. If you have children in your group who have shown they want to make a commitment it is important that they understand this is on-going, not just a Backpackers thing and that Jesus will expect them to change. They will be pruned. If they know that Jesus loves them and they love him then they will show that love to others.

Background detail:

- ✚ Every branch of a vine grows from the main 'stock'. When pruned the branches that bore fruit are cut very close to the stock where they stay for most of the year then they grow out quickly and bear fruit again. Any branches that did not bear fruit are cut right off and burnt.

False Lead!

Verse 8 - *'then you can ask for anything you want, and it will be given to you.'* Clearly care needs to be taken that the children don't think they can ask for the latest computer game in prayer and get it! This refers, as explained above, to prayer that comes out of such a close relationship with Jesus that it is asking for just what Jesus would ask for himself. Clearly we can't be 100% sure of always getting this right but the more we know Jesus, the more we understand about him and his teachings, the more likely it is that we will pray for the right things.

Resources for Day 4:

Way in:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Colouring sheet	4A	Y, R
Activity Sheet - Wedding day	4B	Y, R
Use plasticine to make pots which hold water		Y, R
Activity Sheet - Matching Pairs (2 per A4 page)	4C	R, G, B
<u>Tumbler trick</u> Put 3 tumblers in a line on a table. The middle one faces down, the 2 outside face up. You tell the group that the aim of the trick is to make all 3 tumblers face down after 3 moves. You are allowed to turn 2 tumblers with each move. Demonstrate as shown on Resource sheet 4C. Then ask for volunteers to try BUT make sure the middle tumbler is facing up. This makes the trick impossible. If you don't know the trick, it's impossible to succeed. Say that today's bible story is about an impossible situation, but that Jesus used a miracle and not a trick to solve the problem.	4C	
<u>Grapes</u> Share out a bunch of grapes among the group. Each person to put their grapes on a paper plate/sheet of paper towel. Take it in turns to say something you would really like to do/have (e.g. visit USA/own a Ferrari). Anyone who has done that thing has to give you a grape. At the end check who has most/least. (No link to story except through grapes! But it's a good sharing game)		

Story:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Read the story from a children's bible		Y
Tell the story using pass the parcel - have pictures in each layer with sweet and let the children retell the story		Y, R
Retell the story using string shapes		All
<u>Children read the story</u> Cut up the story sheet so that each child has a few lines. Give these randomly to the children and allow them a few minutes to practice their lines. Then ask the children to get themselves in the right order to read the story - for the younger children this will mean sorting themselves alphabetically. - for older children the alphabetical markers can be cut off - they will then need to use their Bibles to find the correct order. Once the order is correct the children can read the story.	4E	R, G, B
Turn water into wine - 1. Jugs	4F	Y, R
Activity sheet - Turn water into wine	4G	G, B
Turn water into wine - 2. cut outs	4H	All

<u>Quiz</u> (with questions on all the stories we have looked at this week) Divide the children into 2 or 3 groups (for each group you will need the following items - a plastic plate, cup, knife, fork & spoon). Ask the groups in turn to answer a question. If they get the answer right they get an item. The winners are the first group to get a full place setting.	4J	R, G, B
<u>Memory Game</u> Select a dozen items maybe related to weddings, parties or the stories we have been looking at this week. Place the items on a tray and give the children a minute to memorise them. Then cover the tray with a T-towel and discreetly remove an item. Get the children to say which item is missing. For the older children you could use key words from today's story or the memory verses.		All
Activity Sheet - Word search	4K	R, G
<u>Roving Reporters.</u> In groups, retell the story as if they were reporting it for their local radio or TV station. OR Write a front page article for a newspaper.		G, B

Response:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Water play - chatting about main theme		Y
Party time - ice wedding biscuits		Y, R
Making wedding favours with tissue or netting, pretty string and sweets or using pretty baskets - see sheet	4L	Y, R, G
Activity Sheet - 'Jesus shows us what God is like'	4M	R, G, B

Memory Verse:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Play Chinese whispers using memory verse		Y, R
Activity Sheets - Memory Verse (code) (2 per A4 page)	M3A	R, G, B
Activity sheet - Memory Verse (rearrange letters) (2 per A4 page)	M3B	R, G
Make a vine each from green pipe cleaners and leaf shapes cut from green card. Write the words from the memory verse on the leaves.		R, G, B

Prayer:

	Sheet:	Groups:
Add water pot to the banner with words "Jesus gives us everlasting life"		All
<u>Prayer Banner</u> Day 4 : Grape shaped prayers	P2B	All

Getting to know you:

Some suggestions:

1. To fit the theme of investigation hide clues around the site to enable a site tour to take place. An alternative would be to lay a trail of breadcrumbs for the children to follow to key points on the site.
2. I am - everyone to say something about themselves beginning with I am ,,,
3. Stand in circle. Leader in middle. Throw ball round circle. As person catches ball they say own name. After a few times, change so that leader calls name as she throws ball and that person has to catch it.
4. One step forward. All stand in a line. Leader calls out stuff like: Who had cornflakes for breakfast? Those who did, take a step forward. Include questions about being at Backpackers before/belonging to a church
5. Get into a line without talking:
 - in alphabetical order of names
 - in birthday order
6. In pairs with someone you don't already know. In 2 minutes, find out as much as you can about them. Later introduce them to everyone else.
7. Body dice - (variation on Twister) 2 teams. 2 large dice - one regular, one with body parts on. Both dice rolled and number and body part called out (e.g. 1 - elbow). Then roll again (e.g. 4 - foot). Number 1 has to connect elbow with number 4's foot.
8. Spider's web - In circle, everyone crosses arms and grabs someone's hand across circle. Aim is to untangle into complete circle with joined hands without letting go.
9. Sharks - like musical chairs only with sheets of newspaper. Ends up with everyone on a small piece of paper.

Energetic Games

1. Grab

In 2 teams. Number 1-5 from opposite ends . Place ball at x

1 2 3 4 5

x

5 4 3 2 1

Call out numbers. Both players try to grab the ball and get back to seat without being tagged by the other one

2. **Disciples** (aka fishes) - name children round circle (Simon, Andrew, James, John) Call Simon, all Simons have to stand up, run round circle and back to own place.

Quiet Games

1. **Backpackers ABC** - think of words about Backpackers beginning with each letter of the alphabet
2. **Storyboards** - can be used as fillers any time

Memory Verse Activities

1. **Pairs game.** For this you will need some small (business card size) pieces of paper or card. Write each word of the memory verse on a separate card (use lower case letters). Make two sets. Place the cards face down on the table or blanket. Each child takes it in turn to turn over 2 cards. If the cards match, they keep the pair. At the end put one set into the correct order to reinforce the memory verse.
2. **Bookmark.** Make a bookmark with the words of memory verse on. Try to use a shape which is relevant to the bible story.
3. **Spinners.** Cut a circle each about 10cm in diameter out of thick card. Decorate the circle on both sides with a bright and colourful design and write the words of the memory verse on one side. Make 2 small holes in the centre of the circle, approx 2 cm apart. Thread about 60cm of thin string or embroidery thread through the holes and tie the ends together to make a loop. Hold the end loops of the thread around your index fingers and twirl the spinner so that the thread becomes twisted. Then pull the thread taut and watch the spinner unwind at speed.
4. **Balloons.** For older groups. Write each word of the memory verse on a slip of paper, roll each one up and put each in a balloon before blowing up the balloon. Children have to burst the balloons, retrieve the bits of paper and lay out the words in order.
5. **Washing line.** Write each word on an A5 piece of paper. Tie a length of string between 2 chairs and have enough clothes pegs ready to attach words to the line. You now have 3 choices of activity:
 - a. Give each child a couple of words and ask them to peg them up in the right place.
 - b. You peg all the words in the wrong order and they have to rearrange.
 - c. You peg every other word and ask the children to fill in the gaps.
 - i. Once the verse has been pegged out correctly, get them to repeat several times, taking away some of the words each time so that they end up reciting from memory.
6. **Quiz.** Divide into 2 teams. Ask questions about the day's bible story. The prize for a correct answer is a word (or sequence of words) from the memory verse. The ultimate winner is the team with the whole memory verse.
7. **Relay.** Divide into 2 teams. Put the words at one end of your area and the children at the other. They take it in turns to run up and collect the words, one at a time. The rest of the group puts the words in order. First team to finish with words in correct order wins.