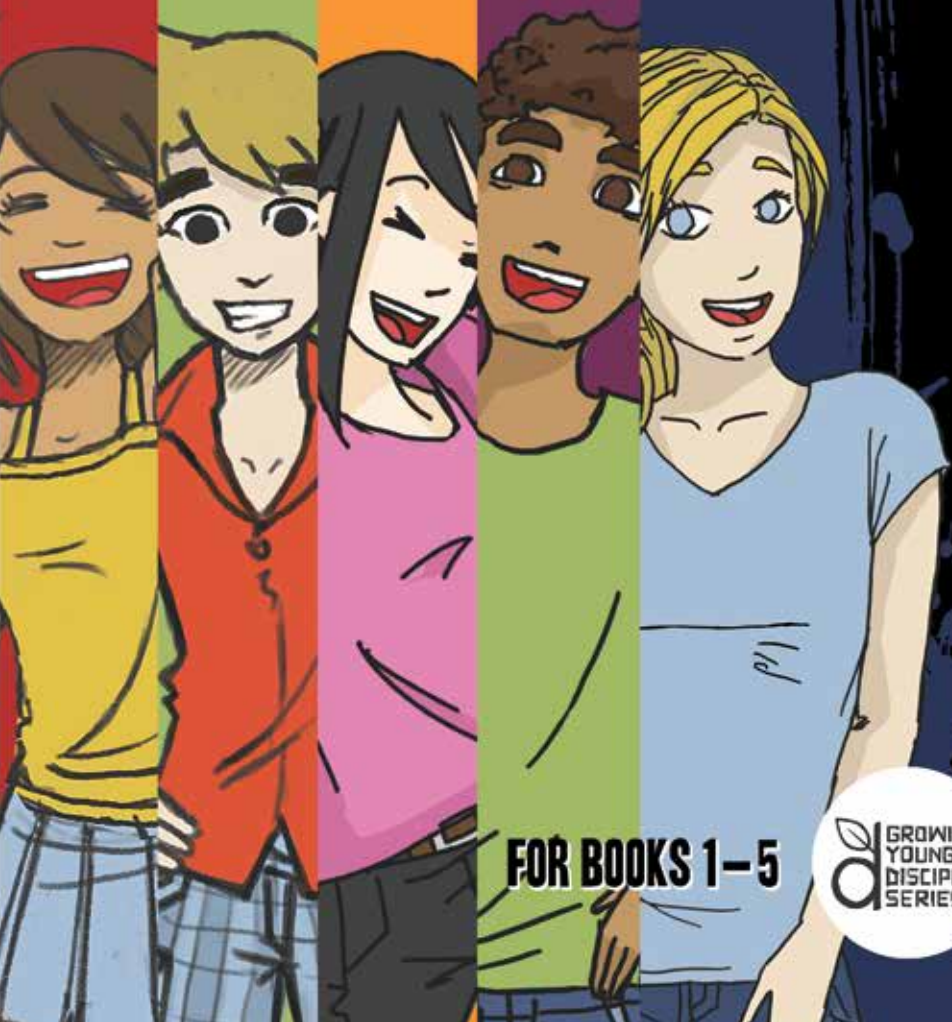


# LEADER'S GUIDE

TIM HAWKINS



FOR BOOKS 1-5

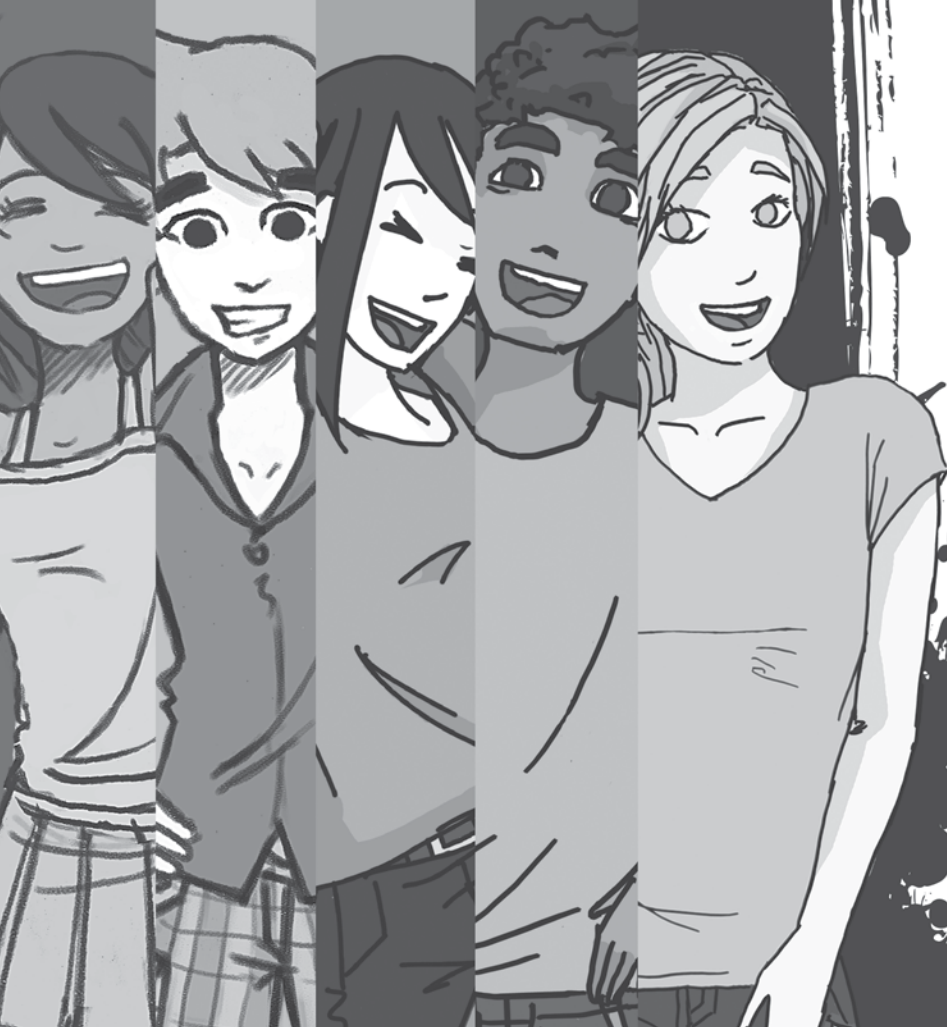


GROWING  
YOUNG  
DISCIPLES  
SERIES



# LEADER'S GUIDE

TIM HAWKINS





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# INTRODUCTION

## WHAT ARE WE MEANT TO DO WITH JUNIOR HIGHS?

### **1** Well, what are we meant to do with junior highs?

That's a question that has frustrated so many youth leaders. You run a youth program, and you've got all these 11–14-year-olds showing up—they're full of enthusiasm, full of energy. What do you do with them? Exhaust them with lots of boisterous games? Get irritated when they won't listen to long Bible talks? Babysit them for a while until they grow to be 'a little bit older ... a little bit more mature ... a little bit more sensible'?

Junior high can be an absolutely awesome time for growing young disciples. This is an age when they want to learn and grow. This is an age when they are starting to make adult decisions. This is an age when they can be challenged to a very high level of Christian commitment.

In the Bible, David was probably about junior high age when he took on Goliath. Mary was probably around junior high age when she agreed to become the mother of Jesus. Some kings of Israel ruled the throne when they were only junior high age. Young people are capable of some mighty achievements!

So the answer to the question 'What are we meant to do with junior highs?' is no different from what we are meant to do with any other age group. We are to train them to be world-changing disciples! When Jesus spoke the words 'Go and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19), he didn't exclude junior highs! Our mission for junior highs is no different from our mission for any other subculture on this planet. We want to train them to be passionate and faithful disciples who will be equipped to go and win the world for Christ—one life at a time.

## **2** The important thing about being a youth leader

One of the most important things you will ever do as a youth leader is to disciple young people. The greatest amount of time, effort, concern and care should go into the spiritual growth of those students whom God has placed into your care. The small number of young people in whom you invest your life will become the godly men and women, the mums and dads, the missionaries, pastors and leaders of our world. The future of the church depends on how faithfully we carry out the command of 2 Timothy 2:2: 'And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others'.

If we want to reach the vast masses of young people, we will do it by equipping a small number of keen Christians to reach their friends. We need to train our junior highs in all the building blocks of being a disciple—in a way that they will be able to reproduce in the lives of their friends. We want to equip our junior highs to reach their friends, to reach their school and to reach their world for Christ.

## **3** Your relationship with your students

You are about to enter a very privileged relationship with some valued members of God's kingdom. You are about to disciple a small group of junior highs. This relationship will be special and unique.

Because this is a privileged relationship, you need to be careful about a number of things:

- That your relationship will always point those in your care towards Christ.
- That you will continue in the relationship for the benefit of your students, not for what you are getting out of it yourself.
- That you will always have the goal that your students will become more independent from you as they grow to be more dependent on God.

You need to keep clear in your own mind that the relationship you will have with your students is the key to effectively training them as disciples. You are not just putting them through a Bible study course; you are there to invest your life in theirs.

Training junior highs as disciples involves a combination of three important factors:

1. God's word—which will train disciples in every area of their life.
2. Your own walk—junior highs will imitate the strengths and weaknesses of their leader.
3. Your shared life—as you share your life together, real learning and real growth will occur.



## The format of these studies

### i. There is a progression through the series

There is a definite progression from Book 1 through to Book 5.  
Start at the beginning and work your way through!

#### BOOK 1: Discovering Jesus

- Does not assume that students are already Christians.
- Very suitable for new Christians.
- Great for those just starting to ask questions.
- An ideal way to lead junior highs to Christ!

#### BOOK 2: First Steps

- Designed for junior highs who are just starting to live for Jesus.
- Ideal as the initial follow-up after a student makes a definite commitment to Jesus.

#### BOOKS 3, 4 AND 5

- Designed to help junior highs live out their Christian faith.

### ii. There is a progression through each study

There are generally three different sorts of question in each study:

- *Introductory questions*

Particularly in the early studies, there are often some questions at the beginning of the study to help junior highs to start thinking about the issues.

- *Bible questions*

The basis of each study is to find out what God says in the Bible. The age of junior highs has been kept in mind here—most of these questions are reasonably easy to answer once the Bible passage has been read. Encourage students to express themselves in their own words.

- *Application questions*

Most studies finish with questions to help junior highs to apply the Bible teaching to their own lives. These questions are crucial and take the students beyond just having 'head knowledge'. These questions help students to put into action what they are learning from God.

## **How to get started**

These studies are not primarily designed to be a 'whole youth group' activity (although many have successfully used them that way!). They are primarily designed for the junior highs who want to grow more. Probably the best way to find these students is to:

- pray that God will raise up those junior highs who want to learn and grow more
- invite interested junior highs from your youth group to come and learn from the Bible what it means to follow Jesus.

At our own youth group, we constantly advertise that we are starting a new *Discovering Jesus* course and encourage junior highs to take the step from general teaching about Jesus (in our youth group) to personal training to follow Jesus (in a small group). More about this in Chapter 2—'Discovering Jesus'.

Set the standards high for your discipleship training group. Help your students to make it a top-priority in their weekly commitments. These studies are designed for those in junior high—say, from their last year of primary school, through to their first few years of high school (school years 6–9, or 11–14-year-olds). For discipling senior high (school year 10 and up, or 15–18-year-olds), you should use the Discipleship Training series from the same author and publisher.



### **Some tips for starting out**

- Don't assume that all your students know and trust each other. Spend some time in your group's early days helping the students to share a little about their lives, and to learn to listen to and care for each other.
- Let them know that they are here to learn and grow. Set the standard high for what you want to accomplish as a group.
- Find a place where you won't be distracted. Try to avoid the outdoors!
- Gather the group so they are close to each other and can see each other.
- Make sure you can see the face of each student.
- If there is a student that is more distracted than others, have them on the opposite side of the group where you can see them clearly. Don't have them next to you!
- Insist on punctuality. Start on time. Don't keep endlessly waiting for the latecomers. If there are students who keep being late, catch up with them outside the group and try to sort out the problem.
- Have fun! Junior highs love to laugh! Make sure you stay in charge, make sure you're achieving worthwhile things, but don't take yourself too seriously.

## **6** Your weekly program

It is really hard to have a formula for a weekly Bible study. You want to make sure that you are learning from the Scriptures, loving each other and praying together—but the time you spend on each section might have to change each week.

You don't have to do a new study every week! It is OK to take a few weeks to complete a study, especially if you are getting good discussion on the topic. If you find that you have run out of time for something one week, start with that the next week.

Here is a useful grid to help you get your group on track. This is the 'GAMES' grid. Keep checking that your discipleship group is showing the following five results:

|          |                |                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>G</b> | Growth         | Are your students growing in their faith in Jesus? Are they growing in their obedience?                                                                   |
| <b>A</b> | Accountability | Do you hold each other accountable to put into practice what you're learning? Do you all help each other uphold high standards in your spiritual journey? |
| <b>M</b> | Ministry       | Are your students ministering effectively outside the group?                                                                                              |
| <b>E</b> | Equipping      | Are you equipping your students to stand strongly for Jesus in a non-Christian world?<br>Are you equipping them to share their faith with their friends?  |
| <b>S</b> | Support        | Are people in your group caring for each other?                                                                                                           |

Keep prayer central to everything you do. Don't let prayer be relegated to the last few minutes. Teach your junior highs how to pray—there are plenty of studies in the series that will help you do just that.



## **7** Looking after junior highs

Junior highs are at a very vulnerable and unsteady time of their life. They need you as a close friend—but not too close! As an adult you have the responsibility for upholding all child protection guidelines that you have been taught at your church. But within those guidelines, aim to care personally for each of the junior highs for whom you have responsibility.

When you meet, ask each of your students how their week has gone. If one of your students tells your group about some difficulties they are having, then that is a time to pause and look after them in your community of care.

### **Some suggestions**

- Don't just dismiss their comment and move on.
- Don't be so tied to 'finishing the study' that you neglect to look after people on the way.
- Listen to what they're saying and support them in what they're saying.
- Resist the temptation to simply give advice.
- Offer practical help.
- Get the whole group involved in praying for them.
- Teach your group that all of us get hurt at some time, and it is OK to talk about it.
- Remind all students of the need to keep confidentiality within the group. Personal sharing in your group shouldn't end up as gossip!
- If caring for a student in a particular situation is beyond you, then with their permission, involve someone at your church who is more senior and experienced than you.

## **Not just teaching but coaching**

These studies will help you teach the Bible to junior highs, but your role is far bigger than this. You are a coach who will train your junior highs to play an active part on Jesus' ministry team. Your role as a discipleship coach is to equip your students—train them, hold them accountable, model for them what it means to be a disciple and encourage them so that they can be active for ministry on Jesus' team.

So share your life with your students. Share your successes and failures. Show them how to live for Jesus by your own example, and model for them how to have an effective ministry with others. Spend time with each student outside your normal group time so that you can coach them individually.

### **How do you know if your group is going well?**

Here is the sign to look for: that your junior highs are standing strongly for Christ outside of your normal group meeting. Jesus has called your students to a lifetime of active service on his ministry team. These studies are here to help you be an effective coach so that together we can win the world for Christ, one life at a time.



## **LEADER ALERT**

Note that these studies use both Old Testament and New Testament passages. Students will need a complete Bible each. While any version of the Bible will work OK, at this stage it might help if everyone has the same version. The questions have been designed to work particularly well with the NIV or Good News Bibles.



Book 1

# DISCOVERING JESUS

WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW JESUS

## 1 How did it start?

I was teaching Scripture at Condell Park High School, in a multi-ethnic area in Sydney's sprawling west. After some months of struggling to present the claims of Jesus to my Year 8 class (13–14-year-olds), two boys from this class came up to me one day and said, 'The stuff you're talking about in Scripture class is really interesting. We'd like to find out more about following Jesus'.

Fantastic! I suggested that we meet one lunchtime a week for five weeks to find out from the Bible what it really meant to follow Jesus. Agreed! We settled on a day, and arranged to meet each other the following week.

Back home I thought to myself 'What am I going to teach them?' I searched my library shelves, but most of the short Bible studies I owned assumed that the students were already Christians. I raced off to my local Christian store, scoured the junior high section, and discovered endless studies on 'Coping with my pimples'; 'Dealing with my parents'; 'Peer pressure—Part 26'; but nothing that would bring interested junior highs to Christ. Certainly nothing that would fit into a State school lunchtime!

That's how *Discovering Jesus* was born—simple, short Bible studies to help junior highs come to Jesus. Since then it has grown to be one of Australia's bestselling Bible study books.

## 2 Who is this book for?

This book was designed for junior highs (ages 11–14), but at our church we also successfully use it with upper primary students and senior highs. Each study is very simple in design, but the group leader can take it as deep as they like. It is the ideal first Bible study book for any student.

- It is great for students who are not-yet-Christians because, as it goes through the gospel, it will help lead them to a faith in Jesus that will change their eternity.
- It is great for students who think that they're Christians because, as they

work through the book, they may discover they have not yet placed all their trust in Jesus.

- It is great for students who are not sure if they're really Christians because, by the time they finish the book, it should be crystal clear in their own minds whether or not they are ready to submit their whole life to Jesus.
- It is great for students who have just become Christians because it takes them back through the gospel to remind them of the commitment they have just made.
- It is great for students who are already established Christians because it is a refresher course on the absolute basics of their faith.

### **3** How do I use this book?

This book can be used to introduce the whole of the Growing Young Disciples series, or it can be used as a stand-alone book. It is ideal as the first resource you use when a young person is interested in finding out about Jesus.

- Use it for students who are just starting in a Bible study group.
- Use it as follow-up for students who have just made a commitment to Jesus.
- Use it to take students from the general teaching of your youth group to a specific commitment to follow Jesus.
- Incorporate it into your baptism or confirmation preparation.
- Use it at school—the studies are short enough to fit into a school lunchtime.

At the youth group at our church, we constantly advertise that we are about to start a *Discovering Jesus* course. We invite students who want to find out more about Jesus to sign up for a five-week course. We run it one hour before youth group. We ask students for a five-week commitment, and at the end of those five weeks, the group dissolves. This is an easier invitation for a junior high to agree to rather than signing up for a never-ending commitment!

However, what we discover is that after five weeks, many of the students want to continue. That's when you set up an ongoing discipleship group, where you can progress through the rest of the Growing Young Disciples series.



## The whole book

The order of the studies in *Discovering Jesus* follows a very definite gospel path. Take your group through the studies in order to gain the maximum value out of the book.

### STUDY 1—Discovering God

Introduces the student to the character of God. In particular, the fact that God cannot stand our sin.

### STUDY 2—Discovering me

As well as showing how precious we are to God, this study shows that all of us sin; all of us are in rebellion against God; all of us deserve God's punishment. It raises the question: if all of us deserve God's punishment, how can any of us ever make it to heaven?

### STUDY 3—Discovering Jesus

Introduces Jesus and shows how he is both fully God and fully human. And yet, amazingly, Jesus never sinned. He is the only one who does not deserve any punishment from God, the only one who deserves to make it to heaven.

### STUDY 4—Discovering Jesus' death

Shows clearly how Jesus has taken away our sins so that we can be forgiven. It goes step by step through the gospel and challenges students to think about whether or not they are truly forgiven.

### STUDY 5—Discovering my response

Shows clearly that a response is demanded of each person, shows what that response is, and helps students to work out whether they are ready to make it.

## **5** Just before you start ...

If this is the first time you have met with these students for Bible study, don't assume that they all know and trust each other. Don't assume that they know and trust you! Don't assume that they even understand why the group is meeting. Take the time to establish your group. It might even be that you don't get to your first study until the second week!

### **Some suggestions**

*Set a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.*

- Have some snacks and refreshments available.
- Learn every student's name, and use it often.
- Listen to each student. Perhaps have some games or exercises that help students talk about themselves.
- Encourage each student.
- Set the tone that this Bible study group is a great place to be!

*Set the goal of the group.*

- Ask each student to write down an answer to a question like, 'What do I really want to get out of this group?'
- Establish that the purpose of this group is to help every group member to find out from the Bible what it means to follow Jesus.

*Set guidelines for your group.*

- Ask each student to write down an answer to a question like, 'What can I do to help this group really work?'
- Set some basic guidelines to keep the group on track. Participants will need to:
  - » be punctual
  - » come every week (and contact you beforehand if they can't make it)

- » have a Bible, a study book and a pen (Do the students bring these? Do you supply them?)
- » respect each other by following some simple rules:
  - Don't speak when someone else is speaking.
  - Don't pay out on each other.
  - Listen to each other.
- » be honest—each person needs to be able to say what they're really thinking without fear
- » respect each other's confidentiality—the only way that people will have the safety to be honest is to agree that personal things shared within the group are not talked about outside the group.

*Assure the students of your commitment.*

- Show your students that you are absolutely committed to them as a group, and as individuals.
- Inspire them to show the same commitment to each other and to you.





# STUDY 1

## DISCOVERING GOD

AIM

To discover the character of God and highlight the fact that he cannot stand our sin.

### Question 1

The questions 'What do you think God is like?' and 'What do you know about him already?' are there to help students express their ideas about God before you have looked at any Bible passages. Encourage students to draw a picture of what they think God is like. (Explain that of course we're not drawing a picture of what God really looks like—just what's in our own imagination!) Students who express themselves better in words can write down some of their thoughts if they prefer. Encourage the students to be creative!

Then go around the group and have each student show and explain their picture to the others (start with yourself!). Encourage students not to criticise or judge what others have done.

You will of course spot things in some of the students' drawings that you know are not quite right. But at this stage, just highlight the bits that are helpful rather than condemning mistakes they might have made. If you need to, you can always raise issues individually outside the group. Try and put together an overall picture of God based on what your whole group has said.

To link in with the questions that follow, say something like, 'We can have all sorts of ideas about what someone is like, but if we really want to know what they're like, we need to listen to them. The same is true of God. We've all expressed lots of ideas, so let's find out from the Bible what God says about himself'.



## LEADER ALERT

Most of these verses are in hard-to-find Old Testament books!  
You might need to help students find them!

### **Question 2—Job 42:2**

This verse shows that God is all-powerful.

### **Question 3—Psalm 147:5**

This verse shows that God is all-knowing.

### **Question 4—Psalm 90:1–2**

This verse shows that God is eternal.

### **Question 5—Deuteronomy 33:3**

This verse shows that God is all-loving.

### **Question 6—Psalm 5:4–6**



## **LEADER ALERT**

This is the crunch verse. So far, the verses have held no surprises. They are what you would expect the Bible would say about God. These verses from Psalm 5:4–6 are saying things that might *sound unusual*. However, the main thing at this point is that we accept that this is what the Bible says about God. Its meaning will become obvious in later studies.

The impact of these verses is that God hates sin. The application is that God hates my sin! Take a little extra time with these verses. This is the link with the studies that follow.

Check out the phrases that these verses use (NIV):

- God is not pleased with wickedness.
- Evil people are not welcome.
- He allows no arrogance in his presence.

- He hates all people who do wrong.
- He will destroy all liars.
- He detests violent, deceitful people.

Take some time to explore each phrase. Ask the students how they are feeling about this description of God. Does this sound like the God they've always believed in?

Students may try and deflect this information from themselves. For example:

'That's just talking about really bad people!'

- Ask them to look again at verse 5—'You hate all who do wrong'.  
So, do you do wrong? Could this be talking about you?
- Look again at verse 6: 'You destroy those who tell lies'.  
So, do you tell lies? Could this be talking about you?

'But we've been forgiven!'

- Don't accept this answer too quickly. Yes, it is a correct answer, but before we leap to it, we need to understand the holiness of God and his hatred of my sin.
- Ask, 'So does everyone get forgiven?' Explore this with your students. They might answer 'yes', so ask them, 'What about a person who doesn't want to be forgiven? Do you think everyone in the world—good or bad—will all be forgiven and go to heaven?' Help them to see that not everyone gets forgiven. (This is explained in later studies.)
- Once you have established that not everyone gets forgiven, ask the student, 'So how do you know that you're forgiven?' Don't worry too much at this stage about getting a precise answer. A helpful comment would be, 'That's what the rest of these Bible studies will make clear to us'.

## Question 7

This first 'tick the answer that shows how you honestly feel' question is an important one. Explain that these are not right or wrong answers. Encourage your students to be honest with their answers.

When it is time to share answers with the group, share yours last. Otherwise students may take your answer as the right one and simply copy you.

Pay particular attention to students who pick any of the responses except 'God really loves me'. This might give you some clues for some follow-up outside the group. (Hopefully you picked 'God really loves me' for yourself!)

## Question 8

Be wary of too many students simply picking 'God hates the wrong things I do' because it looks right. Quiz them: 'But how do you know you are forgiven?'

Take note of students who select 'God doesn't care about the wrong things I do', 'God "puts up" with the wrong things I do' or 'God doesn't like it when I sin, but he knows it's not my fault' as their answer. This could show that they haven't yet fully appreciated God's abhorrence of our sin.

By the way, you would probably pick 'God hates the wrong things I do' for your own answer, but to provoke your students a little, why don't you pick 'God has forgiven absolutely every wrong thing I have ever done' instead? It's also true!

## Question 9

This will give you some clues as to where your students may need some extra support.

## Finish with prayer

If your students are not confident praying in a group, get them to write down a one-sentence prayer each, and then have them read it out. But don't push things too much at this stage. Prayer is not introduced as a topic until Book 2: *First Steps*.



## LEADER ALERT

This study teaches a number of things about God's character. But to help you in your second study, make sure that students understand that God hates our sin. Even start asking the question, 'If God hates our sin that much, how can any of us ever get to heaven?' You don't have to answer this question now; the rest of the book will help you do that.

# STUDY 2

## DISCOVERING ME

To discover what God says about us — that we are absolutely precious to him, and yet we all rebel against him.

### Question 1—‘What the TV ads say ...’ (page 9)

This is an introductory question to start your students thinking about what the world says they should be like. Later on you can contrast this with what God says about us.

### Question 2—Genesis 1:26–31

Work through these questions to discover how very special and precious God has created us to be.

### Question 3—Genesis 3:1–16

This is a long passage. You can retell the story if you prefer. The key points are:

- **Verse 6** | The man and the woman both deliberately disobey God.
- **Verse 8** | This breaks their relationship with God.
- **Verse 23** | The man and the woman are banished from God's presence.

### Question 4—Romans 1:21

We fail to glorify God and give him our gratitude.

### Question 5—Romans 3:10–12, 23

These verses show us that all of us are actively involved in disobeying God.

### Question 6—2 Thessalonians 1:7–9

This is a key verse for students to understand. Many of them simply think, ‘It doesn’t matter if I sin because I know God will forgive me’. This verse shows that there are serious consequences whenever we disobey God.

Note the two descriptions of the punishment for those who disobey God (verse 9):

1. Everlasting destruction
2. Being shut out from the presence of the Lord (as happened with Adam and Eve).

Make sure that the finality of this punishment sinks in. From Study 1 we learned that God hates our sin, and from this study we learn that all of us sin and deserve God's punishment. Keep asking the question, 'So how can any of us make it to heaven?' You don't have to answer that one now. As you work through the later studies in this book, the answer will become obvious.

### **Question 7**

Once again, let the students share their answers before you tell them yours. Take note of students who tick the first two responses—they probably still don't yet understand how seriously God takes sin. Be careful with students who choose the last response (because it looks so right!) and challenge them by asking, 'But how do you know that you're forgiven?'

As the leader, you would probably choose the last response as your answer, but to reinforce the teaching of this study, why not pick 'He knows I'm a sinner because I continue to disobey him'? It is also correct!

### **Question 8**

This is to check whether students have worked out what they deserve from God. If they're saying 'I deserve to go to heaven', that means they probably haven't quite got it yet. A helpful reply might be, 'Well, that might be what you get from God, but do you think you deserve it?' Similarly, with your own answer, emphasise that what we deserve from God is punishment in hell.

### **Question 9**

Encourage your students to be specific. You will get valuable feedback from this question to help you minister personally to each student.

### **Finish with prayer**

If your students are not confident praying in a group, get them to write down a one-sentence prayer each, and then have them read it out. But don't push things too much at this stage. Prayer is not introduced as a topic until Book 2: *First Steps*.

# STUDY 3

## DISCOVERING JESUS

### AIM

To introduce the person of Jesus—fully God and fully human—and yet sinless! Study 4 is the crunch study, one which provides the answer to the question, 'How can sinful people like us live with a holy and perfect God?' This study introduces Jesus—God's answer to our dilemma.

### Introduction

Reset the scene from what we have learned so far:

- God loves us, but cannot stand our sin.
- All of us sin and deserve God's punishment.
- So how can any of us get to heaven?

### Question 1—Colossians 1:17, 19

- Jesus is 'before all things'—that is, he is eternal (just like God!).
- Jesus has the full nature of God. That is, he is as much 'God' as God is! He is not 'half-God' or 'little God'—he is fully God!

### Question 2—Mark 1:27; 4:41; 7:37

These three verses from Mark's Gospel show us how Jesus proved he had the power of God, and how people reacted to him.

### Question 3—Mark 6:34

This is a helpful balance. Not only did Jesus show the power of God, but he also showed the love of God. He had compassion or pity on the people around him.

## Question 4—1 Peter 2:22

This verse shows us that Jesus never sinned. This is an important fact to establish, as in Study 4, the sinless Jesus becomes sin for us.



## LEADER ALERT

There are no verses here that focus on the humanity of Jesus (that he was fully human). This is because most junior highs have no trouble accepting Jesus as human, but need more information to see that he is fully God. If you want to emphasise the humanity of Jesus, you could look at verses like: Matthew 1:1; Galatians 4:4; Philippians 2:8; 1 Timothy 2:5.

## Questions 5 and 6

Both these questions will give you the opportunity to find out what your students really think about Jesus. This should help you with individual follow-up.

## Question 7

This question will help you determine how well your students understand Jesus as Lord and the demands that he makes on their life.

## Finish with prayer

If your students are not confident praying in a group, get them to write down a one-sentence prayer each, then have them read it out. But don't push things too much at this stage. Prayer is not introduced as a topic until Book 2: *First Steps*.





# STUDY 4

## DISCOVERING JESUS' DEATH



This is the crunch study which provides the answer to the question, 'How can sinful people like us live with a holy and perfect God?' This study shows how the death of Jesus pays for our sins and offers full forgiveness and eternal life.

### Introduction

Reset the scene from what we have learned so far:

- God loves us, but cannot stand our sin.
- All of us sin and deserve God's punishment.
- So how can any of us get to heaven?

Today we discover God's answer!

### Question 1—Colossians 2:13–15

This is crucial stuff.

- **Verse 13** | We are dead in our sins,
- **Verse 13/14** | but God made us alive with Christ
- **Verse 15** | by defeating the devil and all his forces at the cross.

### Questions 2 and 3

Both 1 Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:4–6 tell the same story: Jesus died on the cross to deliver us from all our sins. He has taken away our sins and our punishment so that we can be forgiven by God and granted eternal life.

Take time on these verses so that this message is clear.

The diagram on page 20:

This diagram is a summary of the gospel. Use this as an opportunity to explain clearly what Jesus did by dying and rising for us, and the need for us to respond. If you already know an outline of the gospel, this is a good time to present it clearly. Do whatever it takes so that the gospel is clear.



## LEADER ALERT

None of the verses in this study refer specifically to Jesus' resurrection. The reason for this is to keep the message of the study very simple, with a rightful focus on Jesus' death. Obviously, Jesus' death does not make any sense without his resurrection, so keep mentioning this in your explanations. The gospel is summarised again in Study 5, where both the death and resurrection of Jesus are mentioned in Romans 4:25.

### Question 4

This question is to check your students' understanding of the gospel. If students pick the first or last response, then gently try to show them that their answer cannot be right! The important point to get out of this question is that only those who believe in Jesus and trust in him are forgiven by his death. (This sets the scene for Question 6.)

## Question 5

Once again, this question is to check how well your students understand the gospel. If students select any of the first three responses, gently try and correct them.

## Question 6

If you have established in Question 4 that not everyone gets forgiven by Jesus' death, then the answer to Question 6 is vital—'So how can you know whether Jesus has really forgiven you or not?'

Let the students share their answers before you reveal yours. Your answer could be as simple as 'Have I asked him?' The answer to this question will be explored in depth in Study 5.

Your students should finish this study knowing:

- Jesus has died and risen so that people can be forgiven.
- Not everyone gets forgiven by Jesus' death.
- It's really important to work out whether you have been forgiven!

More about this next week.

## Finish with prayer

If your students are not confident praying in a group, get them to write down a one-sentence prayer each, and then have them read it out. But don't push things too much at this stage. Prayer is not introduced as a topic until Book 2: *First Steps*.

# STUDY 5

## DISCOVERING MY RESPONSE



'Have I really been forgiven by Jesus' death?' This study should make clear what the response is that God demands of us and whether each student has yet made that response.

### Introduction

Reset the scene from what we have learned so far:

- God loves us, but cannot stand our sin.
- All of us sin and deserve God's punishment.
- Jesus has died to forgive us from every sin.
- So how do I know if I am really forgiven?

### Question 1—Matthew 7:13–14

The teaching about the two gates should be clear. There are two clearly different ways that you can live your life. This needs to be obvious, because in Question 5 students will come back to this picture to mark in where they are! (Don't tell them this yet!)

### Question 2—Romans 4:25

This summarises the gospel from last week and highlights the importance of Jesus' resurrection.

### Question 3—John 1:12

This verse shows that you have to make a response if you want to become God's child. Explain the following two words:

1. Believe—not just a head belief, but a true belief that leads you to trust someone (with this age group, it's always good to substitute the word 'trust' for 'belief'—it's easier to understand).
2. Receive—what does it mean to 'receive' Jesus? It's like receiving a present. Someone can offer you a present, but it doesn't become yours until you receive it. You have to take it, unwrap it and open it. Until you receive the present—no matter how valuable it is—you never get to enjoy it. If you push the present away, it will never be yours! It is the same with Jesus. He is offering you the most marvellous present of all time, but it only becomes yours—you only get to enjoy it—when you say, 'Thank you Jesus', take his death and resurrection and make them yours for life.

### **Question 4—Matthew 7:24–27**

This verse is important because both house-builders hear the same message from Jesus, but only one of them does something about it. In the same way, everyone present in your *Discovering Jesus* group has heard the same message from God. But it will only make a difference to you if you do something about it.

### **Question 5**

This is crunch time for your students. This is where they 'go public' about where they are at in their journey of discovering Jesus. They need to look back at the picture of the two gates and the two roads on page 23, then draw themselves in the picture.

Set this up to encourage the students to be honest with their answer rather than just giving you the answer they think you want. Suggest to them a number of alternatives:

- Maybe you're standing outside the two gates ready to make your decision.
- Maybe your honest answer is that you're really not living Jesus' way, and realistically you are somewhere along the wide road.
- Maybe you've been following Jesus for a while, and you know that you are a fair way down the narrow road.
- Or maybe you've just decided to become a Christian, and you're just inside the narrow gate.

After everyone has had time to mark themselves in, have each student show others where they have placed themselves. If you have a whiteboard or a large piece of paper available, you might draw an enlargement of this picture so that students can come up and draw themselves on the same picture.

Take careful note of where students place themselves but avoid criticising at this stage. You might want to ask students to clarify their answer: 'So it looks like you've just made a decision to become a Christian ... how did that happen?' Celebrate the honesty of each student.

## Questions 6–8

These questions are here to help you see how much students really understand about their decision to follow Jesus.

- Question 6 will show you whether they are still basing their faith on something they have done — 'A Christian is someone who does all these good things' rather than 'A Christian is someone who has placed all their trust in Jesus'.
- Question 7 is to recheck whether the student knows if they themselves are really a Christian.
- Question 8 will identify what the student thinks is the next step for themselves.

## Finish with prayer

If your students are not confident praying in a group, get them to write down a one-sentence prayer each, and then have them read it out. But don't push things too much at this stage. Prayer is not introduced as a topic until Book 2: *First Steps*.



## Once you have finished ...

Your work has just begun! Make time to catch up with each student individually within a week or so of the group finishing. Your aim in catching up is to help you identify for each student where they are up to in their spiritual journey. You want to help them check that they understand what it means to follow Jesus and whether they have yet taken that step.

Here are some suggestions.

- When dealing with junior highs, make sure that their parents know exactly what you're doing.
- Collect the *Discovering Jesus* books at the end of your course. You can then use the information in each individual student's book to guide your follow-up.
- Use the picture on page 23. Chat through with each student where they have placed themselves in that picture. This individual follow-up might just be where they make a commitment to Jesus!
- Use other answers the student has given to guide your follow-up.
- Return the book to each student at the end of your time with them.

## Plan the next step

- Will your *Discovering Jesus* group become an ongoing Bible study group? If so, order your copies of *First Steps* to help you take that journey with your students.
- Do some individual students need to be integrated into existing Bible study groups?
- Can you interest each student in becoming part of your local church youth group?
- Can you invite their whole family to be part of your church?
- Above all—pray! Pray that God will cause the seeds of faith that have been planted to keep growing and producing lasting fruit.

The rest of the Growing Young Disciples series is designed to help you develop and grow your junior highs as faithful disciples.



Book 2

# FIRST STEPS

STARTING TO FOLLOW JESUS



## **1** The whole book

This is a great introduction to the first steps of discipleship. This is ideal as the first follow-up for a junior high student who has made a solid commitment to Jesus. The five studies of the book focus on five key areas:

### STUDY 1—What's happened to me?

This is a refresher course to highlight the changes that happen when you give your life to Jesus.

### STUDY 2—You're in the family!

Welcomes the new believer to the blessings of gathering with God's people in church and in your Bible study group.

### STUDY 3—Let's listen to God!

Establishes the new believer in the discipleship habit of regular Bible reading.

### STUDY 4—Let's talk with God!

Establishes the new believer in the discipleship habit of regular prayer.

### STUDY 5—A new way to live

Highlights the importance of being able to see specific life-change now that you are a follower of Jesus.



## 2 Prayer

You will note that at the end of each study there is space for students to write out a short prayer to God. This is there to help them to feel comfortable praying out loud in a group. Writing out their prayer first, and then reading it out loud, will be easier than just having to make up words on the spur of the moment.

In Study 4, the space for the prayer changes to take into account what has been learned in that study. This is to help junior highs to have a richer variety in their prayers.

Only use this writing out technique if your group needs it. If your group is already well-practised at praying out loud, then there is no need to make them write it out first!

## 3 Memory verses

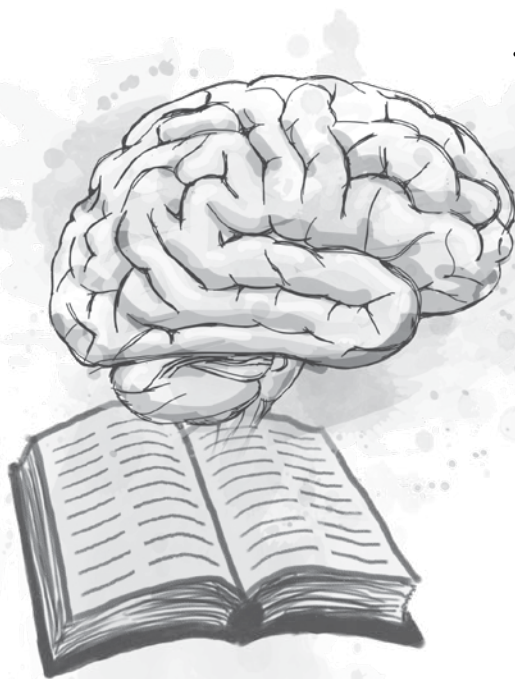
Each study has a memory verse at the end. This is an excellent learning aid for students memorising a verse perfectly so that they know for certain what God has said on a particular issue.

Memory verses in the book are from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible. If you are all using another version, you may want to learn the verses in the version you all use. However, make sure you all learn the *same* version—that way you can keep each other on track.

The memory verses are from the NIV as these are easier to learn (usually a little shorter than the Good News Bible). But the *questions themselves* are easiest to answer if you are using the Good News Bible (TEV).

Here's how to make memory verses really work:

- Learn the verse yourself before you set the task for the students. Make sure you know it perfectly. Show your students that it's not an onerous task!



- Drill your students in the formula for learning a verse. If you keep this consistent across every verse, it makes it easier to remember them all. Here is the four-step formula:
  1. The heading—for example, 'New life in Christ'
  2. The reference—for example, '2 Corinthians 5:17'
  3. The full verse—for example, 'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!'
  4. Repeat the reference—for example, '2 Corinthians 5:17'
- After you have demonstrated how to learn the verse, set the students the task of memorising the verse word for word before your group meets the next week. You might even want to teach the first verse to everyone while they're at your group!
- To help them memorise it easily, teach them this method:
  1. Memorise the heading—say it over a few times to make sure you have it.
  2. Then add the reference—say the reference over a few times to make sure you have it.
  3. Then put the two together—say, from memory, the heading followed by the reference.
  4. Continue this method to add the whole verse. Memorise the first short phrase of the verse, then when you know you've got it right, try and run the whole thing through from the beginning. Check any errors, and then add the next phrase.

5. Continue this until you have the whole verse memorised, including the heading and reference at the beginning, and the reference repeated at the end.
  6. Then write out the whole verse from memory. Then check it word for word with the original, to make sure you have no errors. Repeat this process until you have the whole thing word perfect.
- This whole process should take about five minutes for the average verse. But it's really important to do this early in the week, so you're able to reinforce it in your memory using the following technique. Otherwise, the verse won't stick.
  - Once you have memorised the verse perfectly, run it through your head three times in the next hour.
  - Then run it through your head three times during the rest of the day.
  - Then run it through your head once a day for the rest of the week.
  - The first week you set a memory verse, contact each student individually during the week to make sure that they know it. This is vital to do for the first memory verse! You need to set a standard in your group that everyone knows it.
  - When you meet the following week, have every person in your group say the verse from memory (you start!). Encourage those who are faltering, but maintain the standard of having the verse word perfect. Celebrate when the whole group succeeds!

# STUDY 1

## WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME?

### AIMS

To review the fantastic changes that happened when you made the decision to follow Jesus.  
To introduce the concept that now you are a changed person, you need to live a changed life.

#### Question 1—2 Corinthians 5:17

Shows that you are a brand-new person (with a brand-new way to live!).

#### Question 2—Romans 5:8–10

- **Verse 8** | Shows God's love in sending Jesus to die for you.
- **Verse 9** | Shows that through Jesus' blood (death) we are:
  - » justified (put right with God)
  - » saved from God's wrath (anger).
- **Verse 10** | Shows that we've been changed from an enemy into a friend.

#### Question 3—Ephesians 1:4–7

- **Verse 4** | God had chosen me!
- **Verse 5** | God adopted me as his child!
- **Verse 7** | I am forgiven!

#### Question 4—Ephesians 1:13

God has given us his Holy Spirit (more about this in Book 4: *Dealing with Doubt*—Study 4 'Is God really changing me?')

#### Question 5—Ephesians 2:4–5

We have been brought from death to life!

## Question 6—Ephesians 2:10

We have a whole lifetime of good deeds to do.

## Question 7—Isaiah 55:7

- Leave ... our wrong way of life.
- Change ... our wrong way of thinking.
- Turn to ... the Lord.

## Questions 8, 9 and 10

These application questions are the opportunity for students to say what they think. Take note of their answers—these will help you with your individual follow-up.

## Finish by praying

## Explain the memory verse for next week

See notes in introduction to *First Steps* in this Leader's guide.



## STUDY 2

# YOU'RE IN THE FAMILY!

### AIMS

To show the importance of meeting together with other Christians.  
To establish good habits in attending both church and Bible study group.



## LEADER ALERT

If your group has worked on the memory verse from last week, then start your group this week by giving everyone the opportunity to say the verse and show that they have learned it. Celebrate your success as a group!

### Question 1—1 John 3:1

Establishes that all Christians are God's children.

### Question 2—Hebrews 13:1

We are to love each other as brothers (and sisters!).

### Question 3—Hebrews 10:24–25

- **Verse 24** | Help each other to do good things.
- **Verse 25** | Don't give up meeting together.
- **Verse 25** | Encourage each other.

### Question 4—Matthew 18:20

Jesus promises to be with us, especially when we gather together as Christians.

## Question 5—Romans 15:7

It's important to accept each other (even when people are a little different from us!).

## Question 6—1 Thessalonians 5:12–13

It's important that we respect our spiritual leaders—they are the leaders of our spiritual family. (This might be a good opportunity to work out how you can encourage the ministers or pastors at your church!)

## Question 7—Acts 2:42



# LEADER ALERT

This verse is a *description* of what the early Christians did when they first met together. It is not a *command* that we have to do exactly the same! But it's not a bad model for us to look at—and learn from!

- Learning from the apostles' teaching. (How do we do that now? By studying the Bible!)
- Fellowship (sharing together as Christian brothers and sisters).
- Breaking of bread. (Does this mean sharing 'The Lord's Supper' together—or does it just mean 'eating meals together' [the Good News Bible leans that way]? Either way is good. My suspicion? It simply means 'hanging out together around a meal'!)
- Prayer.

You might like to work out how you will do each of those four things in your Bible study group.

## Question 8

This is to help discover which Christian groups each student is involved with. Hopefully, they will already attend at least your small group and church. Get them to see the advantages and opportunities at different groups.



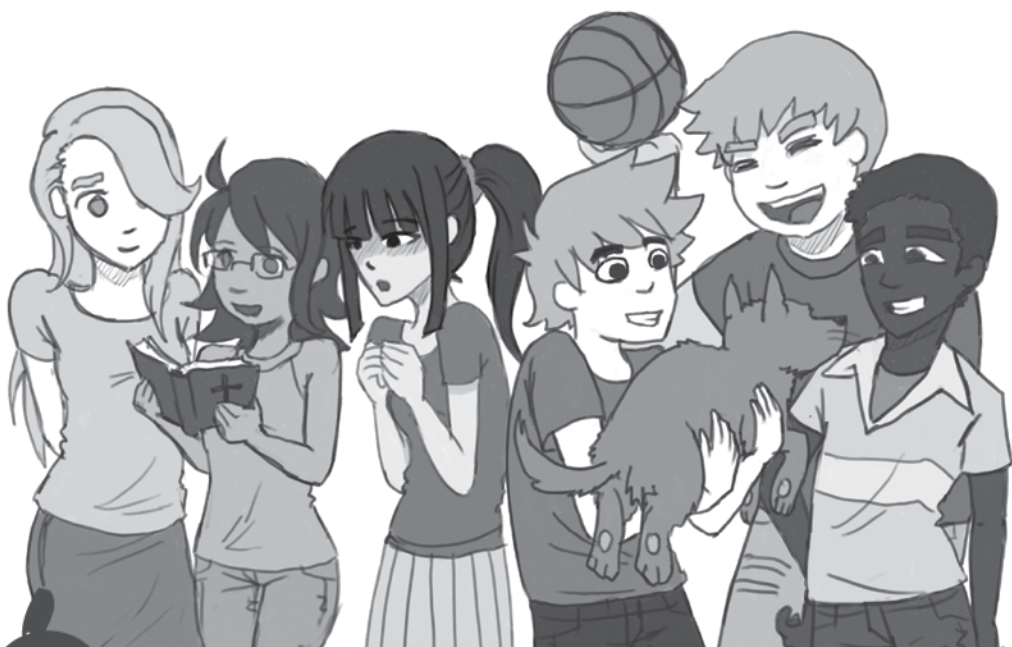
## Question 9

This will help your students to identify what they can do to make their fellowship with other Christians more valuable. This is an important emphasis—guard against the danger of merely being critical of any particular Christian group ('Well, I'd go to church if they made it more interesting'). Focus on the positive—'What can I do to make it better?'

If your group needs help in attending church, you might organise a plan—arranging transport, meeting together for a meal before or after, etc.

## Finish by praying

## Explain the memory verse for next week



## STUDY 3

# LET'S LISTEN TO GOD!



To establish each person in the habit of regular Bible reading so that they keep listening to God and putting it into action.



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Question 1—2 Timothy 3:16–17

- Show that all Scripture comes from God.
- Demonstrate the four things it will do for you:
  1. Teach
  2. Rebuke
  3. Correct
  4. Train in righteousness (give instruction for right living).
- Use the diagram on the bottom of page 19 to explain these four things.

### Question 2—Psalm 19:7–8

This question simply follows the natural rhythm of this psalm. It keeps following a pattern:

'The law of the Lord is ... (perfect) ... and what does it do? 'Revives the soul' (or 'gives new strength').

Get your students to write down the four descriptions of God's word and the four things it will do for them.

### **Question 3—Psalm 119:9–11**

- **Verse 9** | shows that we have to live and obey God's word.
- **Verse 10** | shows the importance of serving God (truly seeking him) and not disobeying him.
- **Verse 11** | says keeping (hiding) God's word in your heart is what helps you stop sinning. But what does that mean? Perhaps memorising verses is part of 'hiding God's word in your heart'?

### **Question 4—Matthew 7:24–27**

The whole emphasis of this study is not about just reading God's word—it's about putting it into action. By analysing the two house builders, you should be able to show the importance of putting God's word into action.

The key answer in this question is the last one: 'Who does Jesus say this house builder represents?' The answer is not that one is a Christian and one isn't, nor that one hears from God and one doesn't. They both hear God's word. But only one of them does anything about it!

### **Question 5—Ezra 7:10**

Note the progression from this helpful example.

1. Ezra studied God's word.
2. He practised (observed) it.
3. He then taught it to others.

You might want to ask, 'How are we to do all three of those things?'

## Questions 6, 7 and 8

The answers to these questions will help you to understand where each student is at with their Bible reading, and how you can help them more. It would be a good idea to have a selection of Bible-reading aids available so that those who want to start or reinvigorate their Bible-reading practices will have some resources to help them. You will find a variety of resources on the Youthworks Media webstore ([youthworksmedia.net](http://youthworksmedia.net)) or at your local Christian bookshop.

**Finish by praying**

**Explain the memory verse for next week**



**BIG  
NEWS!**

# STUDY 4

## LET'S TALK WITH GOD!

AIM

To establish each person in the habit of regular prayer.



### LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

This study gives three reasons why it's important to pray.

#### **The first reason to pray? Because Jesus did!**

We look at two verses—one from the beginning of Jesus' three-year ministry and one from the end. An important point to make to your students might be, 'If Jesus saw the need to pray, surely we have an even greater need to pray!'

#### **Question 1—Luke 6:12**

Explain that Jesus was about to appoint the 12 men who were to be his disciples. This was a very important decision. How did he prepare for this? He spent the night praying to God! (Have you ever done that?)

#### **Question 2—Mark 14:35–36**

Explain that Jesus was about to face the most horrendous moment of his ministry. He knew that the next morning he would be tortured and killed. He went to his father in prayer. He asked his father whether there was any way he could be spared from that suffering.

But look at how he finished his prayer! This shows us what prayer is all about! Sure, we should ask for what we want, but in the end, can we have the same submissive attitude as Jesus? ‘Yet not what I want, but what you want.’

## The second reason to pray? Because God wants us to pray!

### Question 3—Philippians 4:6–7

- **Verse 6** | The alternative to worry? Prayer.
- **Verse 6** | Our attitude? A thankful heart.
- **Verse 7** | The result of prayer? God's peace.

## The third reason to pray? Because God promises to answer!

### Question 4—Matthew 7:7–11



## LEADER ALERT

These verses contain bold promises. There are two dangers to avoid:

1. *Watering down the promises.* Sometimes we can be tempted to think ‘Jesus didn’t really mean that “when you ask, you will receive”’. Read the words! That’s exactly what he said—and what he meant!
2. *Misunderstanding the answers.* Sometimes we think that God’s answer has to always be ‘yes’. Look at the rest of the study to help sort this one out.

- **Verses 7–8** | The promise is given three times, just to make sure we really get it!
- **Verse 11** | Note that Jesus says his Father will give good things to those who ask him. A good question to ask your students is: ‘What do you think God would do if we asked for something that he knew would be bad for us?’

We have now looked at three reasons why it’s really important to pray. The remaining questions now look at the way that God answers.

## Question 5—John 15:7

God's promise to give us what we ask for is conditional on us remaining in him. God is looking for us to have an intimate relationship with him. And when we are in that vital relationship with him, it makes sense that we will probably ask for things that he wants to give us!

## Question 6—Barriers to prayer

- **James 4:3** | Greed and selfishness may cause our prayers to be ineffective.
- **Psalm 66:18** | Unconfessed sin may be a barrier to prayer.

## Questions 7, 8 and 9

The answers to these questions will help you to understand where each student is at with their prayer life and how you can better help them. You might have some suggestions available to help your students be more prayerful.

## God's answers

This is a crucial page (page 31). Read through it with your students.

- 'Yes', 'No' and 'Wait'. These three common answers will help your students understand the different ways God might answer prayer.
- 'I love you', 'Thanks', 'Sorry' and 'Please'. These four types of prayer will help your students to have a balanced prayer life and avoid the danger of only ever going to God with a spiritual shopping list!

## Finish by praying

Note that there is space for your students to write four short prayers to fit in with what they've learned in this study.

## Explain the memory verse for next week

## STUDY 5

# A NEW WAY TO LIVE



To show that because God has made you into a brand new person, he has given you a brand new way to live!



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Question 1—Ephesians 5:8–11

- **Verse 8** | This point will keep being reinforced throughout this study. Because God has brought us into the light, we need to live like people who belong to the light.
- **Verse 10** | We have to find out what pleases the Lord.
- **Verse 11** | And have nothing to do with things that belong to the darkness.

### Question 2—John 14:15

Loving Jesus means we will obey him.

### Question 3—Ephesians 4:22–24

- **Verse 22** | You've got to get rid of your old way of living.
- **Verses 23–24** | And replace it with a new way of living.



## **Question 4—Ephesians 5:1–2**

- **Verse 1** | We must try to be like God.
- **Verse 2** | We are meant to live a life just like Jesus.

## **Question 5—1 John 3:18**

The way we show our love is not just with words; it needs to be backed up with action.

## **Question 6—Galatians 6:10**

We should do good things for everyone but particularly to our fellow Christians. (You can start with the people in your Bible study group!)

## **Question 7—Matthew 5:16**

The result of us living in this new way should be that other people will praise God.

## **Let's put it into action! chart** (pages 38–39)

This is the important part. Help your students to see that living a new life is not a theoretical thing; it has to be put into action in everyday life. Spend some time sharing your answers to this chart so that you might be able to support each other to truly live as new people.

## **Finish by praying**

Note that there is space for your students to write four short prayers to fit in with what they've learned in this study.

## **Explain the memory verse for next week**



Book 3

# **LIFE TO THE MAX**

**LIVING AND LOVING LIKE JESUS**

## The whole book

This book is designed to help junior highs live faith-filled lives—not just to coast along trusting in their own strength but to actively seek to be Christlike in all that they say and do. These studies show that there's only one way to live for Jesus: flat out! God does not want half-hearted disciples, and the only way to truly enjoy the new life that Jesus has given you to the max is to run it at full pace.

### STUDY 1—Life to the max by trusting Jesus

This study is to show students what faith really is and to help them to live faith-filled lives.

### STUDY 2—Life to the max by overcoming temptation

This study is to help students deal with the temptations in their lives and to enjoy living for Jesus by dealing with their sin.

### STUDY 3—Life to the max by loving like God does

This shows us how fantastically loving God is and challenges us to live our lives with the same sort of love.

### STUDY 4—Life to the max by forgiving like God does

This shows us how fantastically forgiving God is and challenges us to live our lives with the same sort of forgiveness.

### STUDY 5—Life to the max by giving like God does

This shows us how fantastically generous God is and challenges us to live our lives with the same sort of generosity.

# STUDY 1

## LIFE TO THE MAX BY TRUSTING JESUS

### AIMS

To teach the biblical concept of faith.

To challenge students to live a faith-filled life.

To help students to make intentional decisions to trust God rather than trusting their own strength and instincts.



## LEADER ALERT

If your group has worked on the memory verses from the last book (*First Steps*), then you might want to start your group this week by going through all five memory verses that you have already learned. Celebrate your success as a group.

### Introductory statements (page 2)

Read these through with your students to set the scene for this study.

### Question 1—Matthew 14:22–33

Read through this passage with your students. This dramatic story is establishing the essence of faith: that you can trust in what Jesus says (living by faith) or you can trust in what you can see around you (living by sight).

- **Verses 28–29** | Show what happened when Peter lived by faith.
- **Verses 30–31** | Show what happened when Peter lived by sight.

### Question 2—2 Corinthians 5:7

This spells out the two ways you can choose to live: by faith or by sight. Write these two words in at the top of the table at Question 3.

### Question 3

Here are two examples of how to live by faith or by sight.

1. **Jeremiah 9:23–24** | What can you boast about? That is, what do you really trust in? This verse urges us not to trust in our own abilities but to trust in God's unfailing love.
2. **Proverbs 3:5–6** | Trust in the Lord, not in what you think you know! (Lean not on your own understanding.)

### Question 4

These verses look at God's track record. That is, we know we can trust him because he has consistently shown himself to be absolutely trustworthy.

- **1 Kings 8:56** | He has kept every promise! (Not one word has failed!)
- **Hebrews 6:12** | Those who believe receive what God has promised.
- **Philippians 4:13** | God gives us the strength to face every situation.

### Question 5

This is to help you see what your students already know about the Bible. Can they think of examples of people who trusted God? Almost every story in the Bible is a story of faith. If they're struggling to think of any, remind them not to overlook the obvious ones (for example, Mary trusting God by agreeing to be the mother of Jesus). You should probably have a few stories up your sleeve in case your students can't think of anything. Perhaps if you start a story off, they would be able to finish it for you. If you're really stuck, check out Hebrews 11 before your group meets. That chapter will give you plenty of examples!

### Questions 6, 7 and 8—Matthew 14:22–33

These three questions will help your students to get inside the account of Peter walking on the water. Ask your students to think of a situation where they're finding it difficult to trust Jesus (perhaps you could talk about these situations in your group?).

- Question 6

This helps your students to identify which stage of Peter's faith journey best describes them at the moment. Note: There is an opportunity for them to make up their own answer if they wish.

- Question 7

This helps your students to identify what they believe Jesus might be saying to them about their situation. Once again, there is space at the end for them to make up their own answer if they wish.

- Question 8

This helps your students to identify one step they can take to walk by faith in their situation.

## **Finish by praying**

## **Explain the memory verse for next week**

If you haven't already introduced memory verses by going through the previous book *First Steps*, then you'll need to introduce them now. Check out the tips in this Leader's guide at the beginning of the *First Steps* section (see pages 33–35).



## STUDY 2

# LIFE TO THE MAX BY OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

## AIMS

To teach your students that they don't have to endlessly give in to temptation.

To challenge students to live an obedient life.

To help students experience the joy of claiming Jesus' victory in specific areas of temptation.



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Think spot statements (page 7)

Read these through with your students to introduce where this study is heading.

### Question 1

This question sets the scene of God calling on us to run away from temptation so that we don't fall into sin.

- **2 Timothy 2:19** | Turn away from sin!
- **2 Timothy 2:22** | Flee from evil desires and strive to live for God.
- **Romans 6:11–14**
  - » Verse 11 | You are dead to sin.
  - » Verse 12 | Don't let sin rule over you!
  - » Verse 13 | Don't surrender any part of your body to sin.
  - » Verse 14 | Sin must not be your master.

## Question 2—1 Corinthians 10:13

At this stage, your students might be thinking, 'I know what God wants, but I can't do it! I can't resist temptation! I always give in to sin!' While it is perfectly understandable that students feel like that, this verse (which is the memory verse) will show them that it doesn't have to be that way! You can resist sin. You don't have to give in to temptation.

- PART 1—Stacks of other people are tempted like you are. You are not being singled out. Lots of other people will be able to help you fight temptation. (Here in your Bible study group is a good place to talk about this!)
- PART 2—God will never let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. If you believe this promise, then it is always possible to say 'no' to a temptation. To illustrate this, ask students to think of a recent time when they sinned (something in the last 24 hours would be good). Now ask them to think about it: was it possible for them to say 'no' to that temptation, or were they compelled to go along with it?
- PART 3—Every time you are tempted, God provides a way out! You've just got to look for it. There is always a way that means you don't have to give in to temptation. Think back to that last time you were tempted—what was God's way out?

## Question 3

Here are the practical steps to help you stop temptation leading to sin.

- **Matthew 4:3–4** | When Jesus was tempted, he said 'No!' right at the start (didn't play around with the temptation) and chose to believe what God had said.
- **Psalms 119:9–11** | This is a refresher verse (you looked at it in *First Steps*). Hiding God's word in your heart and living according to God's word will help you to stop temptation from leading you into sin.
- **James 4:7** | Sometimes we're scared to resist the devil because we think that if we resist him, he will just try harder and harder until eventually we cave in. But the Bible says, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you'.



- **James 5:16** | Confessing sins to each other and praying for each other is powerful! Your Bible study group is a great place to do that.

Read through the paragraph at the bottom of page 9. That will help you to understand how total Jesus' victory really was when he died on the cross.

### **Question 4**

Get your students to work through this so that they can see specific steps they can take to help them deal with difficult temptations. Use this information to help you with individual follow-up with each student.

### **Finish by praying**

### **Explain the memory verse for next week**



## STUDY 3

# LIFE TO THE MAX BY LOVING LIKE GOD DOES

## AIMS

To show the amazing love that God has for each one of us.  
To inspire us to love in the same way.



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Question 1—1 John 4:19–21

This question shows the basis for our love: we love because God first loved us. If we really love God, it must show through in our love for others.

### Question 2—1 John 3:16–18

- **Verse 16** | Truly loving someone means we are prepared to lay down our lives for them. This introduces students to the concept of agape—unconditional, self-sacrificing love.
- **Verse 16** | The way we can know how to do this is that Jesus has already loved us that way!
- **Verses 17–18** | True love is not just talk: it is action.

### Question 3—this clarifies why and how we should love.

- **John 13:34–35** | Why? We are commanded to love. How? Just like Jesus did!
- **Matthew 5:13–16** | Why? So that other people will praise God. How? By letting our lights shine forth and influence others.

## **Question 4—this clarifies who we should love.**

- **Matthew 5:43–47** | Not just our friends but our enemies as well.
- **Galatians 6:9–10** | Love all people, but there's always a special family love for our fellow Christians.

## **Question 5—1 Corinthians 13:4–7**

This is a simple matter of analysing the verse and writing down almost every word under one of the two columns. Most of the 'Love is/does' answers are found at the beginning and end of this passage. Most of the 'Love is not/does not' answers are from the end of verse 4 to the end of verse 6.

Show how each of the qualities of love is incredibly Christlike. Substitute the word 'Jesus' for 'love' and you'll see that it makes sense. 'Jesus is patient; Jesus is kind ...' etc. Then see how well you are going at putting this Christlike love into action by substituting your own name for 'love' and seeing if it's accurate. '(Your name) is patient; (Your name) is kind ...' etc.

Take some time to explore what each of these qualities means, and try and think of some examples where we can show this sort of Christlike love today.

## **Question 6**

This gives your students the opportunity to think of specific ways to put some of these qualities into action this week. Students might like to draw a picture of what this might look like, or they can describe it in words.

Whatever your students come up with, remember to ask them next week how they went in showing love to a fellow Christian and to a non-Christian.

## **Finish by praying**

## **Explain the memory verse for next week**

## STUDY 4

# LIFE TO THE MAX BY FORGIVING LIKE GOD DOES

## AIMS

To show the depth of God's forgiveness for each one of us.

To inspire us to learn to forgive those who are hurting us – just like God does.



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Question 1

This gives your students the opportunity to focus on a time when someone hurt them. As you share your answers, be pastorally sensitive to students who are still hurting. Thinking of situations like this is important, because we're not thinking about forgiveness as an abstract concept; we need to put forgiveness into operation with people who are actually hurting us!

### Question 2—Ephesians 4:32

This question introduces students to the values of kindness and compassion. They need to learn to forgive others the same way that Jesus has forgiven us.

### Think spot

This is an opportunity for students to respond out of their general knowledge. Try and make as long a list as possible of all the things that God has forgiven us for. Make sure that students realise that the cost of this forgiveness was the death of Jesus. They need to understand that forgiveness is always costly.

### Question 3

Students may well be thinking, 'But I can't forgive! It's too hard!' Question 3 shows us the example that Jesus has given us, and Question 4 shows us some practical steps we can take to be more forgiving.

- **1 Peter 2:23** | Jesus did not pay back, even when he was attacked unfairly.
- **Luke 23:33–34** | Jesus even forgives the people who are in the act of killing him!

Are you starting to understand how BIG God's forgiveness is?

### Question 4—Romans 12:13–21

This gives you the opportunity to work through a solid passage of Scripture and extract some principles for being able to forgive like God does. You could get the students to work on this individually, or you could do it as a whole group. The whole way through this exercise, get your students to think of specific examples of how they could put this into operation.

- **Verse 13** | I will learn to be generous with the things God has given me.
- **Verse 14** | When another person hurts me, I will want that other person to be helped and blessed by God.
- **Verse 15** | I will support other people when things are going well for them and when they're not.
- **Verse 16** | I won't pretend that I am better than others.
- **Verse 17** | I won't try and get back at people who have hurt me.
- **Verse 18** | I will try to get along with other people as much as possible.
- **Verse 19** | I don't have to always make everything right, because I know that God will do that on the last day.
- **Verse 20** | I will go out of my way to care for the people who give me a hard time. This might even change them.
- **Verse 21** | I will not simply follow other people and do what is wrong. It's better to do what is right.

## Question 5

This is an opportunity to take some of the things you have discovered in Question 4 and apply them to current situations. These should be specific steps to actively take a step of forgiveness with specific people.

### Finish by praying

You might like to pray for each other and mention the specific situations that were referred to in Question 5.

### Explain the memory verse for next week



## STUDY 5

# LIFE TO THE MAX BY GIVING LIKE GOD DOES

## AIMS

To show the enormity of God's generosity to us.

To inspire your students to be generous givers and to establish lifelong habits of having a heart ready to share with others.



## LEADER ALERT

Don't forget to review last week's memory verse as well as the ones you have learned previously.

### Introductory statements

Read through the comments on page 21 to set the scene for this study.

### Question 1—Psalm 24:1

This is the starting point for generosity. God owns everything I possess! This thought is very contrary to what the world teaches, so it is worth spending some time on it so that it sinks in with your students. 'That means that God owns your new iPhone!' 'God owns your bank balance!'

### Question 2

This is the next step in understanding generosity: God has been amazingly generous to us!

- **Ephesians 1:3** | He has given us every spiritual blessing (not just some of them!).
- **Romans 8:32** | He has given us his own Son. So we know that he will now give us all things.

- **Matthew 7:11** | God keeps giving us good things when we ask.
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** | Jesus gave up everything for us. He sacrificed himself for us.

### Question 3

This now looks at our stewardship of God's generosity. How are we meant to use what God has given us?

- **1 Corinthians 4:2** | We are to be faithful to our master in how we use everything.
- **1 Peter 4:10** | We need to be good managers, to use what we've been given for the good of others—to serve them.
- **2 Corinthians 9:11** | God has made us rich so that we can be generous. That is, the reason that God gives us things is so we can give them away to others.

### Question 4

This tackles the natural resistance to generosity: 'If I give more away, won't I be worse off?'

- **Proverbs 11:24–25** | The generous person will get even more. (God can look after that!)
- **Matthew 19:29** | Those who give up anything for God's kingdom will be blessed a hundred times over.

### Question 5

This question introduces three areas where we are called upon to be generous. Read through the descriptions on page 24 so that your students understand 'Time', 'Talents' and 'Treasure'. The chart gives you the opportunity to think specifically about how you can be more generous with these three precious commodities in both serving Jesus, and in helping others.

### Question 6

These passages talk in more detail about being generous with money and possessions.



- **Matthew 6:19–21** | Jesus' instructions are that we should not store up treasure on earth but store up treasure in heaven. You might like to look at some examples of what this might mean. Jesus' reason for saying this is hard-hitting: 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (verse 21). Where we put our money will always reveal where our heart truly is.
- **1 Corinthians 16:1–2** | We are to regularly put aside money, in proportion to our income, that we might bless others.

Read through the paragraph in the middle of page 25.

- It's not the amount we give of our money that matters to God. It is growing a heart that is generous.
- Talk briefly about tithing 10% of their income to God's work. There is a large amount of material on this topic which this study doesn't go into. There is more information in Discipleship Training series Book 4: *My Mission from God*, Study 9—'I'm a steward of God's money'. Or you may want to add your own comments and experiences on the practice of tithing.

## Question 7

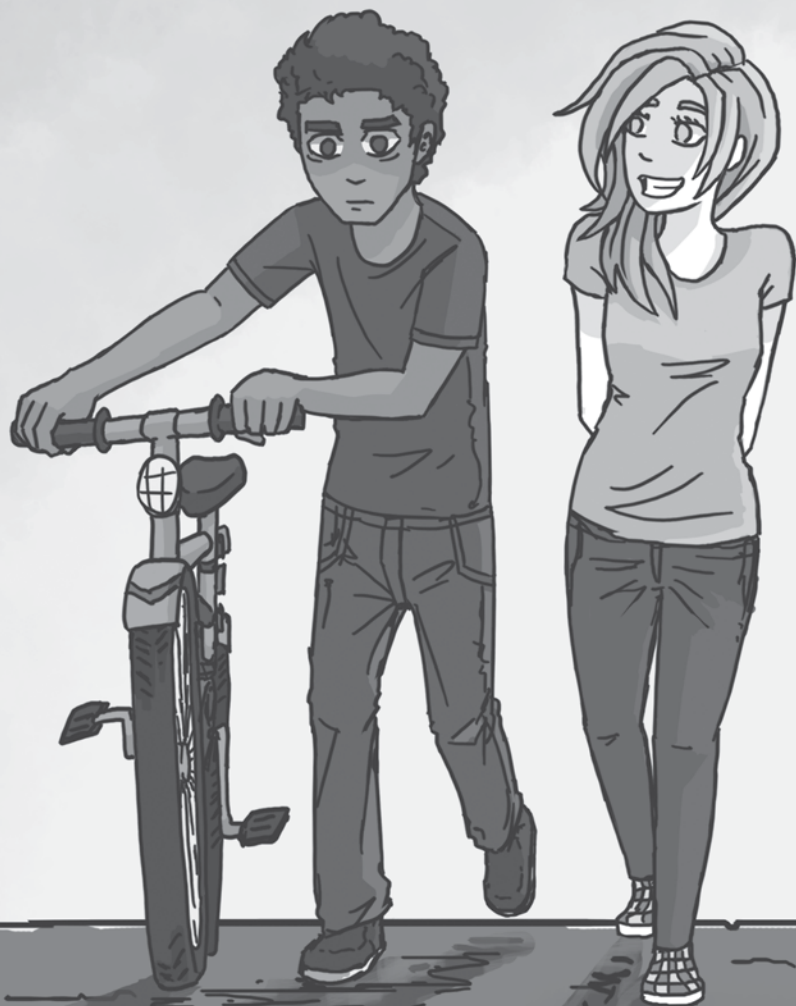
This is an opportunity to speak frankly about money and generosity. You need to be up-front about your own generosity. You can't expect your students to do something that you yourself do not do.

Talk through what it means to earn money. Some of your students will earn absolutely nothing. Others will have small amounts of pocket money. Others may have a part-time job. The important thing is not how much you earn; it's how generous you are being with what God lets you have. If you only receive \$2 pocket money per week, you still need to learn how to be generous with that. If you don't learn generosity when you earn only a little, you will find it very difficult to learn when you are earning mega-bucks!

## Finish by praying

You might like to pray for each other to be super generous people.

## Explain the memory verse for next week



Book 4

# DEALING WITH DOUBT

KNOW FOR SURE THE PROMISES OF GOD

## The whole book

This book is designed to help junior highs deal with the issue of doubt. For any young Christian, there will often be nagging questions: 'Am I really a Christian?'; 'How do I know I'm really forgiven?'; 'Has God given up on me?' These five studies will help teens to work through these doubts, and to understand the promises that God has made in his word and the power that God has given them to help them live for him.

### STUDY 1—Has God really accepted me?

This study helps clear up the biggest doubt that new Christians often have: 'Am I really a Christian, or am I just pretending?' This study will help students to know for sure that, if they are serious about following Jesus, God is serious about hanging on to them.

### STUDY 2—Has God really forgiven me?

It's very easy to feel guilty because of your sin. Sometimes we can know about God's forgiveness without really experiencing it. This study looks at four facts to help us see how total and absolute God's forgiveness really is. Then we can live as people who are truly forgiven.

### STUDY 3—Does God really love me?

'I know God is loving. But how could he love me?' This study aims to show junior highs that God's love is bigger than they can ever imagine and that they can trust him to love them no matter what.

### STUDY 4—Is God really changing me?

It can be really encouraging as a Christian if you can see the progress God is making in your life. This study assures students of the presence of God's Holy Spirit in their life and that they will experience the power of God's Holy Spirit in their ongoing growth.

### STUDY 5—Can God really use me?

In God's master plan to make disciples of all nations, he wants to use you! This study shows students how God has both called them and equipped them so that they can help their friends to discover Jesus. A great introduction to witnessing for Christ.

# STUDY 1

## HAS GOD REALLY ACCEPTED ME?

### AIMS

To assure students of the great promises of God that all who turn to him will be saved.  
To help students to be sure about whether or not they are truly a Christian.  
To help students to walk forward in the sure and certain knowledge that they are safe in God's hands.

This is probably the biggest doubt that new Christians have. 'Am I really a Christian, or am I just pretending?' Two things will often fuel this doubt:

1. Many students will have seen some of their friends already give up on following Jesus.
2. Many students will have experienced periods of sinfulness where they themselves feel like they have failed.

This study is to help students to know for sure that, if they are serious about following Jesus, God is serious about hanging on to them.

The study centres around three great promises from God:

- The person who trusts in Jesus already has eternal life (Questions 1–3).
- Jesus will never turn away anyone who genuinely comes to him (Questions 4–5).
- Jesus has already given each believer the gift of the Holy Spirit (Questions 6–8).



## LEADER ALERT

If your group has worked on the memory verses from the previous books (*First Steps* and *Life to the Max*), then you might want to start your group this week by going through all ten memory verses that you have already learned. Celebrate your success as a group!

## **Introductory statements** (page 3)

Read these through as a group to set the scene for this study.

### **Question 1—John 3:16**

This question looks at the most well-known verse in the Bible to see the two great promises for the person who truly believes in Jesus:

1. They will not perish (in hell).
2. They already have eternal life (going to heaven)!

### **Ask yourself**

These 'Ask yourself' questions on page 4 are meant to be answered with either 'yes' or 'no'. This is to help students see how simple and how powerful God's promises are.

Ask your students: 'Who are these two great promises in John 3:16 made to?' The answer is of course: 'Whosoever believes in him!'

So ask yourself, 'Do I really believe in Jesus?' If the answer is 'yes', then that means the promises apply to you!

That means that if the answer to 'Do I really believe in Jesus?' is 'yes', then the answer to the second question ('So has God saved me from death and given me eternal life?') also has to be 'yes'!

### **Read John 3:16 again.**

Get your students to re-read John 3:16 as it is written at the bottom of page 4 where they personalise it by putting 'I' and 'me' into the verse. You might like to read John 3:16 and substitute the actual names of your group members (for example, 'For God so loved Sam ...', 'For God so loved Sally ...' etc.).

Students who truly trust in Jesus need to see that the promises apply to them!

### **Question 2—John 5:24**

There are three great promises here for the person who hears and believes in Jesus:

1. Jesus has given them eternal life (present)
2. Jesus will not condemn them (future)
3. Jesus has already crossed over from death to life (past).

### **Ask yourself**

These 'Ask yourself' questions on page 5 are meant to be answered with either 'yes' or 'no'. If the answer to the first question is 'yes', then the answer to the second question has to be 'yes' as well. That means the promises apply to me!

### **Question 3—1 John 5:11–12**

These verses answer three key questions about eternal life:

1. Who gives it?
2. Who receives it?
3. Who doesn't receive it?

### **Ask yourself**

If the answer to the first question is 'yes', then the answer to the second question has to be 'yes' as well. That means the promises apply to me!

### **Question 4—John 1:12**

This is a promise for those who receive and believe in Jesus: God makes them his children!

You might want to explain what it means to 'receive' Jesus. If someone offers you a present, how do you 'receive' it? There are two things you need to do so that the present they are offering actually becomes yours:

1. Actually take it from them (and say 'thanks' as you do it!). Until you actually take the present, you don't have it!
2. Unwrap it, enjoy it and make it yours!

If God is offering you the 'gift' of Jesus, how do you 'receive' him? In the same way:

- Say 'yes' to Jesus (with thankfulness!).
- Make Jesus the most important part of your life.

## Ask yourself

If the answer to the first question is 'yes', then the answer to the second question has to be 'yes' as well. That means the promises apply to me!

### Question 5—John 6:37

This great promise shows that if I truly come to Jesus, he will never turn me away.

### Question 6—Ephesians 1:13–14

God gives us the Holy Spirit as the guarantee that we belong to God. The students might ask, 'OK, but how do I know that I have the Holy Spirit?' Questions 7 and 8 address that.

### Question 7—Galatians 4:6

When we have God's Spirit, we can cry out 'Abba, Father'. 'Abba' is the word that a little Jewish kid would use to their father. Our closest translation would be 'daddy'. (See note below.)

### Question 8—1 Corinthians 12:3

Only when we have the Holy Spirit can we honestly treat Jesus as our Lord. (See note below.)

Note: Here's how these two verses help us to know whether we truly have God's Holy Spirit in our life:

- 'Can you look at the God of the universe—your creator, your sustainer and your judge—and honestly treat him as Dad?'
- 'Can you look at Jesus, the perfect Son of God, and honestly treat him as Lord and Master?'

These two verses tell us that you can only treat God as your dad and Jesus as your Lord when you have God's Holy Spirit. So if you can treat God as your dad, and you can treat Jesus as your Lord, you must have the Holy Spirit!

## Question 9

This is a great way of helping students work out whether they truly are a genuine Christian. Ask the group each of the three questions (slowly and deliberately) and get each student to mark down an honest answer of 'Yes', 'No' or 'Not sure'.

Once students have written down the answers to all three questions, go around and find out what answers your students wrote down. Make a note of the information to help you in your individual follow-up. Here's how to interpret the answers to the questions (bearing in mind that the accuracy of this interpretation lies in how honestly the questions were answered):

- If they honestly answered 'yes' to all three questions, then in all likelihood they really are a Christian.
- If they honestly answered 'no' to all three questions, then they are probably not yet a Christian—and probably not planning to become one at this stage.
- If they answered 'yes' to the first two questions and 'no' or 'not sure' to the last question, then they are probably falling away in their belief and they may need to take action so that they don't give up. They should check it out with you!
- If they answered 'no' or 'not sure' to either of the first two questions, then they might not yet be a Christian—so they should check it out with you!
- But if they then answered 'yes' to the third question, then that probably means that they are now ready to become a Christian! Encourage them to do it now!

## Questions 10 and 11

These give each student the opportunity for some personal feedback. Make a note of their answers to help you in your individual follow-up.

## Finish by praying

Use the space on page 9 if it helps your students to write their prayer out first.

## Explain the memory verse for next week

If you haven't already introduced memory verses, then you'll need to introduce them now. Check out the tips at the beginning of the *First Steps* section of this Leader's guide (pages 33–35).



## STUDY 2

# HAS GOD REALLY FORGIVEN ME?

### AIMS

To assure students that when they truly confess their sins, God truly forgives them.  
To help students to realise how big God's forgiveness is from how big Jesus' death is.  
To encourage students to not live their lives in shame and guilt but as fully forgiven children of God.  
To reassure students that no matter what they have done, they can consistently turn away from their sin and turn back to God.

The study centres around four great facts from the Bible:

1. God has promised to forgive (and he keeps his promises)—Questions 1–2.
2. Jesus' death brings total forgiveness—Question 3.
3. When God forgives (he forgives completely)—Questions 4–6.
4. Even when we sin, God welcomes us back—Question 7.

### Question 1—1 John 1:8–10

Verses 8 and 10 show the foolishness of hiding our sin.

Verse 9 shows how God wants us to confess our sins, and that he promises that afterwards he will forgive us and purify us.

### Question 2—Acts 2:38

When we turn away from our sins, God's promises are sure:

- We are forgiven.
- God sends his Holy Spirit to strengthen us.

### Question 3—Hebrews 9:28

The whole purpose of Jesus' death was to take away sin. Read through the statements on page 12 and emphasise to your students how the death of Jesus guarantees our forgiveness.

### **Question 4—Psalm 103:12**

How far away is the east? How far away is the west? When God removes our sins—he takes them as far away as possible! He doesn't leave them 'hanging around' for us to go back to when we feel like it. His forgiveness is *that big*!

### **Question 5—Hebrews 10:17**

God says he will 'remember our sins no more'. That means that when we confess a sin to God and he forgives it, he then wipes it from his memory! He doesn't hang on to it so he can use it to accuse us later!

### **Question 6—Romans 8:1, 33**

We are not condemned! No-one can bring any charge against us! God's forgiveness is *that big*!

### **Question 7—Luke 15:11–24**

Take some time to read through this whole story of the disobedient son and the forgiving father. Focus on how the father reacts in verses 20–24. Then show how our heavenly Father reacts the same way whenever we come back to him.

### **Question 8**

This is to check what each student has learned from the study.

### **Questions 9–10**

This indicates where each student is struggling. Take a note of their answers for your prayer and follow-up.

### **Finish by praying**

You might want to focus on prayers of confession—use the answers from Questions 9 and 10 to form the basis for this. Pray to support each other.

### **Explain the memory verse for next week**

Don't forget to review it next week!

## STUDY 3

# DOES GOD REALLY LOVE ME?

### AIMS

To assure students that God absolutely, really loves them!  
To assure students that nothing can separate them from God's love.  
That, knowing God's love and acceptance, students will be encouraged to live lovingly and faithfully.

#### Question 1—Psalm 103:8–13

These are some great descriptions of how loving God is. Help your students to express them in their own words. Note that verses 8–10 have multiple answers.

#### Question 2—1 John 4:9–10

This demonstrates the amazing love of God in sending his Son Jesus to die for us.

#### Question 3—1 John 3:1

It is God's love that enables us to become his children.

#### Question 4—Matthew 7:9–11

These verses use a picture of what an imperfect, human dad is like. Your students may have had all sorts of experiences—both positive and negative—with their earthly dads. These verses show us that if even failed human dads know how to give good things to their kids, then certainly our heavenly Dad will be super generous in giving us good gifts (verse 11).

#### Question 5—Hebrews 12:5–6

This introduces a new factor into God's love. A truly loving father will pull his kids into line when they stray. Your students might have had some negative experiences of discipline from earthly authorities. But when God disciplines us, it is a sure sign of his love for us. He absolutely wants the best for us!

## Question 6—Romans 8:38–39

Nothing can separate us from God's love (so don't let anything try!).

## Question 7

Go back to your list from Psalm 103. Encourage students to identify with one of the descriptions. Get each student to talk about experiences they have had where this love of God has meant something powerful for them.

## Questions 8–10

Listen carefully so you will know how to help your students in their struggles.

## Finish by praying

You might want to focus your prayers on loving and adoring God. Use the 'I love you' section of the prayer sheet to highlight this.

## Explain the memory verse for next week

Don't forget to review it next week!



## STUDY 4

# IS GOD REALLY CHANGING ME?

### AIMS

To assure students that if they belong to Jesus, they have been given God's Holy Spirit as a gift in their life.

To show students that God's Holy Spirit is at work in our lives to give us the strength to change to be more and more like Jesus.

To help students understand that we all need to live a life guided and controlled by God's Spirit.



## LEADER ALERT

This study might raise questions from your students. Depending on their background, they might have differing understandings of the work of God's Holy Spirit. Here is where you'll find some extra information:

- This topic has already been introduced in the Growing Young Disciples series—Book 2: *First Steps*, Study 1—Question 4.
- You have already looked at the certainty of having God's Holy Spirit earlier in this book—*Dealing with Doubt*, Study 1—Questions 6–8.
- Spiritual gifts are discussed in Growing Young Disciples series—Book 5: *Sticking with It*, Study 7—Questions 2–4.
- You can also find more detailed information in Discipleship Training series—Book 2: *My Awesome God*—Studies 6–8.
- The issue of spiritual gifts is dealt with further in Discipleship Training series—Book 4: *My Mission from God*—Study 7.

### **Question 1—Ephesians 1:13**

The clear teaching from this verse is that when you believe in Jesus, you are given the Holy Spirit. You can't have one without the other!

### **Question 2—Galatians 5:25**

If we've been given God's Spirit, we must live that way. You can demonstrate what keeping in step means by describing a troupe of dancers performing on stage. There is a lead dancer out the front and the whole of the chorus line has to keep in step with the lead dancer. Imagine how bad it would be if one dancer was completely out of step! In the same way, we are meant to keep in step with God's Spirit—to do what he would have us do—and always follow his lead. Imagine having a Christian who was out of step with God's Spirit!

### **Question 3—Galatians 5:17**

This is what being out of step with the Spirit would look like. Our own human nature—the temptations of the devil—will always be opposed to what God really wants us to do.

### **Question 4—Romans 8:6**

This shows us the results of either being in step or out of step with God's Spirit. One leads to death—the other leads to life and peace.

### **Question 5—Romans 8:9**

This is a good definition of staying in step with the Spirit. We are to be controlled by God's Spirit (not by the sinful nature!).

### **Question 6—Romans 8:13**

This is the active part of staying in step with God's Spirit: we need to put to death our sinful actions. (You will get a chance to personalise this in Question 11.)

### **Question 7—1 Corinthians 6:19–20**

This verse has great insights. Since the Holy Spirit lives in us and we belong to God (because we were bought with a price), then we must live for him!

## **Question 8—2 Corinthians 3:18**

This is the primary work of the Holy Spirit in our lives: he keeps transforming us into the likeness of Jesus!

## **Question 9—Romans 8:26**

This verse shows how God's Spirit helps us to pray.

## **Question 10**

This gives your students the opportunity to see the positive changes that have already happened in their Christian life. Get them to check what they were like six months ago and see if they can identify areas where they have had some improvement. This gives you a great opportunity to sow into the life of each student. Make sure you go along with something positive to say about each one. It can be a great encouragement for a student when they can actually see how God is already working in their life!

## **Questions 11–12**

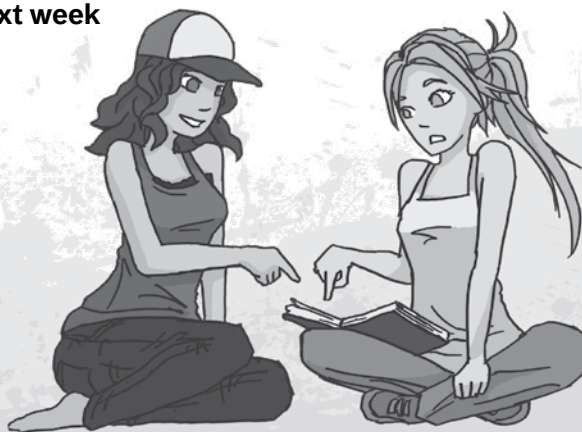
This is a good opportunity to identify what still needs to be worked on. Listen carefully so that you will know how to help each individual student.

## **Finish by praying**

Praise God for the changes he is already working in our lives! Cry out for help in those areas where it is still difficult to stay in step.

## **Explain the memory verse for next week**

Don't forget to review it next week!



## STUDY 5

# CAN GOD REALLY USE ME?

### AIMS

To introduce students to the concept of being a witness for Christ.  
To encourage them that they can be used by God to help bring their friends to Christ.

This study will help junior highs to understand three things:

1. God calls them to have a ministry to their non-Christian friends—Questions 1–3.
2. God then equips them to have this ministry—Questions 4–5.
3. This is something that every Christian can do—Questions 6–9.

### Question 1—Matthew 4:18–20

This is the call to become ‘fishers of men’. See if your students understand what that term means. Help them to comprehend their vital role in catching other people for Jesus.

### Question 2—Matthew 28:18–20

This passage gives us the two key concepts of witnessing for Christ:

1. The mission Jesus gives us to go and make disciples.
2. The assurance that he will not leave us alone as we do it!



## LEADER ALERT

Just out of interest, Matthew 4:18–20 is the first command that Jesus gives his disciples in Matthew’s Gospel. Matthew 28:18–20 is the last command from Jesus that Matthew records! They are the same command!



### Question 3—1 Peter 3:15

This verse shows that the starting point for witnessing is to live a life that sets apart Christ as Lord in your heart. But the way we live should provoke people to ask questions about our faith, and we need to be prepared to answer them.

### Question 4—1 Peter 4:10

This is only the briefest mention of spiritual gifts (there's far more detail in *Growing Young Disciples* series—Book 5: *Sticking with It*, Study 7—Questions 2–4, and *Discipleship Training* series—Book 4: *My Mission from God*, Study 7). But the two key things to note from this verse are:

1. God does give spiritual gifts to each Christian.
2. He gives them to us so that we can serve others—that is, we administer God's grace to others.

If your students are uncertain as to what their spiritual gifts are, don't worry too much about that at this point. Show them that at the end of the study there will be two simple things that everyone will be able to do.

### Question 5—Isaiah 41:10 and Matthew 10:19–20

Both these verses are written to specific people, but they both contain an important principle that can be applied to every Christian: God has not left you alone in your task of helping others to discover Jesus. He promises that he will always be with us and that he himself will speak through us.



## LEADER ALERT

These verses will be especially important to encourage a Christian student who might say, 'I'm the only Christian at my school!' While you can understand that this must feel difficult for them, the important truth here is: 'You are not on your own. God is with you!'

Questions 6 and 7 show us the two things that every Christian can do (irrespective of gifts, experience, training or personality).

### **Question 6—Romans 10:1**

Paul shows us how his heart's desire and prayer for his fellow countrymen who do not know Jesus is that they be saved. Here is the first thing that every Christian can do: they can pray for their unsaved friends.

### **Question 7—Mark 5:19–20**

This man, whom had been demon-possessed and liberated by Jesus, was simply instructed by Jesus to 'go and tell others how much the Lord has done for you'. That's the second thing that every Christian can do: we can tell our friends the difference that Jesus is making to our life.

### **Question 8**

This question gives you a chance to talk about the range of emotions that your students will feel about this task, ranging from excitement to fear!

### **Question 9**

Here is the opportunity to get practical. Have each student write down the names of three of their non-Christian friends (of the same gender). Then write down one practical thing they can do to help them to discover Jesus (for example, invite them to your church youth group).

### **Finish by praying**

Focus your prayers on your unsaved friends. Pray for them by name. Pray that God will use you to help win them to Jesus. Remember to pray for these three friends each time you meet.

### **Explain the memory verse for next week**

Don't forget to review it!



Book 5

# STICKING WITH IT

STUDIES FROM 1 PETER

# The whole book

This whole book has two aims:

1. To help junior highs to stick at being Christians.
2. To give them the experience of working through a whole book of the Bible.

1 Peter is written to new Christians. It is ideal material for those who are young in their faith to work through. It covers an array of topics that are extremely useful to those in the early days of their spiritual journey. These studies are meant to be genuine encouragements for kids who probably sometimes feel like giving up.

**STUDY 1—Sometimes it's really difficult! (1 Peter 1:1–12)**

This study introduces the whole letter, reminds us of what God has done for us and gives practical advice on how to keep going when it gets tough.

**STUDY 2—Do I really have to change my life? (1 Peter 1:13–2:3)**

This study looks at the big changes that God has planned for those who follow him, reminds us of the price that God has paid to take us back and gives down-to-earth advice on living for Jesus.

**STUDY 3—What difference does Jesus make? (1 Peter 2:4–10)**

A great study to focus on who Jesus is and what it means to be gathered around him as his people.

**STUDY 4—Can't I just do what I like? (1 Peter 2:11–25)**

What does it mean to be free in Christ? This study shows how Jesus sacrificed himself as a servant and now calls on us to serve others the same way.

**STUDY 5—But I want to have a good time! (1 Peter 3:1–12)**

This study looks at the biblical principles behind boy/girl relationships and the Bible's guide to having a good time!

STUDY 6—What if my friends don't believe? (1 Peter 3:13–4:6)

This study helps junior highs to stand up for Jesus with their non-Christian friends.

STUDY 7—You mean I can help others? (1 Peter 4:7–19)

This study helps junior highs to identify and use their spiritual gifts, and to stand strong for Jesus when others are pushing them down.

STUDY 8—Sticking at it ... together! (1 Peter 5:1–14)

This study shows the importance of living for Jesus in the community of God's people (church) so that they can be strong against the devil's attacks.

## STUDY 1 (1 Peter 1:1–12)

# SOMETIMES IT'S REALLY DIFFICULT!

## AIMS

To introduce the first letter of Peter.

To reflect on God's blessings for us.

To show us how we can continue to stand firm when things get difficult.

### Let's get started

- Read through the introductory comments on pages 2–3 to help set the scene for the first letter to Peter.
- Answer Questions 1–3, which give you information to help you understand this letter.

### What God has done

- Questions 4–6 show us what God has done for us and how he has showered us with blessings. This is the basis for living for him and sticking with it when the going gets tough.
- Use the Think spot (Question 7) for your students to imagine what some of these blessings might be. Encourage your group to come up with as long a list as possible. You can thank God for these in your prayer time.
- Question 8 shows us that we are being shielded by God's power. This was important to the early Christians who were suffering persecution, and is important for us to know when we are facing hard times.

### When the going gets tough

- Questions 9–12 help us to see that suffering as a Christian actually strengthens us. Even though things might be difficult now, God has a great future for those who belong to him—so stick at it!

## Think it through

- Questions 13–15 also provide opportunities for your students to apply this to their lives. Use their answers as the basis for your ongoing follow-up.

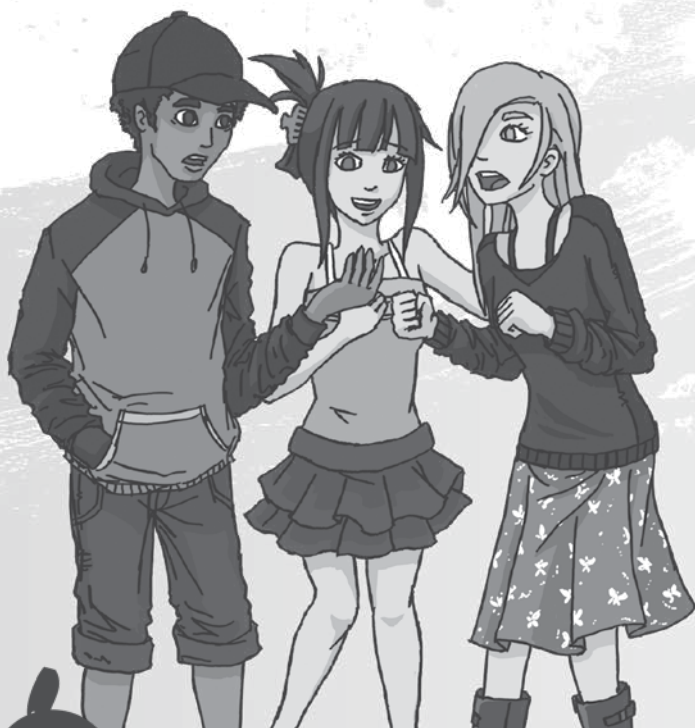
## Finish by praying

Praise God for the blessing you identified in Question 7.

## Review the memory verses

Have you learned memory verses from the previous books?

Keep reviewing them!



## STUDY 2 (1 Peter 1:13–2:3)

# DO I REALLY HAVE TO CHANGE MY LIFE?

### AIMS

To show the changes that are meant to happen in the life of a believer.

To show how Jesus' sacrifice is the motivation for these changes.

To explore some of these specific changes and the importance of grounding them in God's word.

### How should I change?

- Question 1 introduces the big changes that are meant to happen when you follow Jesus.
- The Think spot (Question 2) is a great opportunity for your group to discuss how this affects us personally.

### Why should I change?

- Questions 3–4 give you the *motivation* for these changes: the incredible sacrifice of Jesus.

### So how should I live?

- Questions 5–8 spell out the *implications* of these changes:
  - » Question 5—our relationships with other Christians.
  - » Question 6—starting life brand new for God.
  - » Question 7—depending on God's word.
  - » Question 8—dealing with personal sin.
- Questions 9–14 are the *applications* of these changes:
  - » Question 9—personal application of the issues in question 8.
  - » Questions 10–12—further information on God's word.

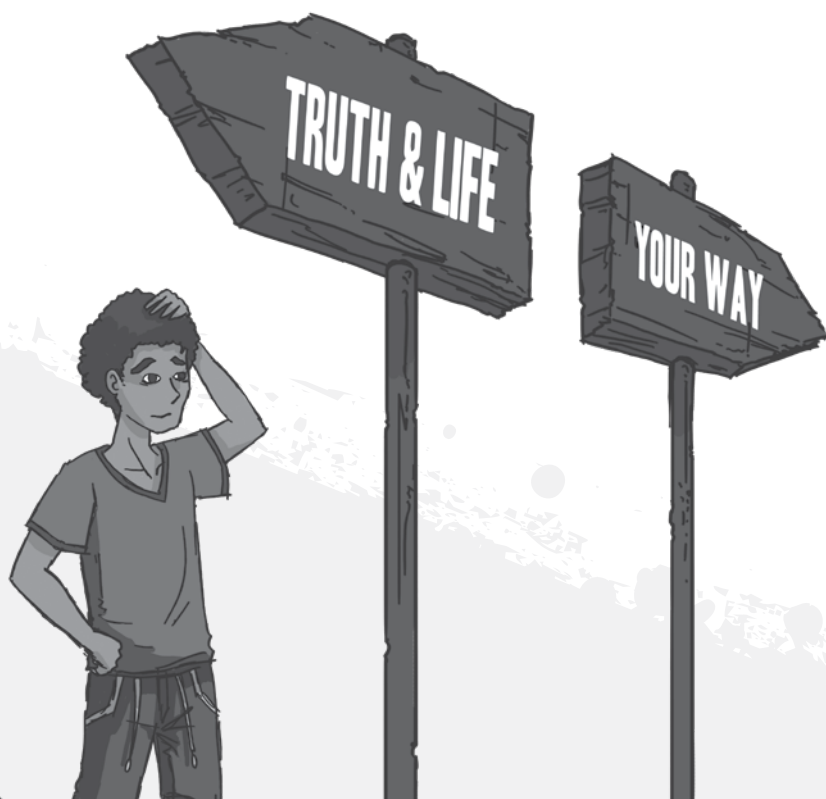


## Think it through

- Question 13—application of reading God's word.
- Question 14—application of the whole study.

## Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!



## STUDY 3 (1 Peter 2:4–10)

# WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES JESUS MAKE?

## AIMS

To investigate the character of Jesus as 'the rock'.  
To show what it means to be built around him as God's people.

### Gather around Jesus

- Questions 1–4 explore the concept of being 'built' around Jesus—like a spiritual house.

### Respond to Jesus

- Questions 5–6 explore the concept of Jesus being the 'cornerstone' that we can use as the foundation for our lives.
- Question 7 shows us that for those who do not believe, Jesus is a stumbling stone that will make them fall.

### Live as God's special people

- Think spot (Question 8) is meant to be connected with Question 7. That is, if our non-Christian friends will 'stumble' over Jesus, what effect does that have on us?
- Questions 9–11 are to help us think through how special it is to belong to God's people.
- Questions 10–11 help students to think through what it means to 'declare God's praises'. (Does this help us with our response to Question 7?)

### Think it through

- Questions 12–13 help your students to be honest with their response to Jesus. Use their answers to guide you in your pastoral care.

### Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!

## STUDY 4 (1 Peter 2:11–25)

# CAN'T I JUST DO WHAT I LIKE?

### AIMS

To show the true nature of Christian freedom.

To show the model that Jesus set of servanthood and submission.

To follow Jesus' example in our servanthood and submission.

### Whose slave am I?

- Questions 2–4 are to help us avoid the temptation of becoming slaves to sin.
- Question 5 is to help us to use our freedom to serve each other. Use the chart to give practical examples of how we put the four commands of verse 17 into action.

### How much do I have to bear?

- Questions 6–7 help us to think about godly submission to rightful authority (always a touchy subject with junior highs!).
- Question 8 shows that godly submission and servanthood won't always make life easy for us. Indeed, Jesus suffered unjustly and has given us an example to follow.
- Question 9 spells out the details of how Jesus suffered unjustly.

### How much did Jesus bear?

- Questions 10–15 are a graphic description of what Jesus went through on the cross and the effect it can have on us. Take as much time as you need for your students to take this all in. Challenge those who you think might not yet be committed to following Jesus.

### Think it through

- Questions 16–17 are there to help your students respond personally so that you can discuss this as a group.

### Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!

## STUDY 5 (1 Peter 3:1–12)

# BUT I WANT TO HAVE A GOOD TIME!

### AIMS

To investigate the principles for Christian marriage and to show the right way to approach boy/girl relationships.

To show that real good times are enjoyed when we follow God's plan.

Read the introductory comments on page 31 to set the scene for this study.

### Boy meets girl

- Questions 1–4 tackle the issue of true beauty. Your students need to see that God is far more interested in what is happening deep inside them than in what they look like on the outside. Use these questions to talk about both girls and guys, and the superficial ways that they attract each other and form relationships. God has something far better in mind!
- Questions 5–7 look at biblical principles for marriage. But from it you can work out appropriate ways for guys and girls to treat each other.
- Use Question 8 if you need to. It is simply a reminder that before God, man and woman stand equal—there is no distinction. Their role in marriage may be different, but their status and importance is exactly the same.

### Hey, let's party!

- Question 9 looks at the important issue of honouring other people above ourselves (often forgotten when people are looking for a good time).
- Questions 10–12 contrast what the world thinks of having a good time with what God says. In the end, obeying Jesus will give us the best life possible. Even if it is harder sometimes, it is better!

### Think it through

- Questions 13–15 will provide a good reflection on the whole study.

### Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!

## STUDY 6 (1 Peter 3:13—4:6)

# WHAT IF MY FRIENDS DON'T BELIEVE?

## AIMS

To help students live lives that honour Jesus and provoke questions about their faith.

To help students to be able to speak up about their faith.

To help students to be able to live obediently even when their friends don't.

Read the introductory comments on pages 37–38 to set the scene for this study.

### How to talk about Jesus

- Think spot (Question 1) gets students to share experiences—positive or negative—when they feel they should have said something to their non-Christian friends about their faith.
- Question 2 gets you to dig into verses 13–16 by rewriting them in your own words. Make sure the principles of verse 15 come out strongly.
- Think spot (Question 3) explores new things students can do to help their friends find out about Jesus.

### What to say about Jesus

- Questions 4–5 help students to work out what the essential message about Jesus is. Help them to see that their message is not primarily about themselves, but about Jesus—his death, resurrection and exaltation as Lord.

### How to live for Jesus

- Questions 6–8 will help students to see there is a brand new life for them to lead. The deeds of their old sinful life are to be put behind them. Help students to identify specific things they have already put behind them and those that they still need to attend to.
- Questions 9–10 are designed to help Christian students to remain committed to their non-Christian friends without joining in the wrong things they do.

## Think it through

- Question 11 will be a refresher question if you have previously taken your group through *Dealing with Doubt*. If you have not done this exercise before, see the notes in this guide for Book 4: *Dealing with Doubt*, Study 5—Question 9.

## Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!



## STUDY 7 (1 Peter 4:7–19)

# YOU MEAN I CAN HELP OTHERS?

### AIMS

To teach students about the importance of using their spiritual gifts to help others.

To help students identify each other's spiritual gifts.

To help students stand strong for Jesus when they're being criticised for following him.

Read the introductory comments on page 46 to set the scene for this study.

### The ability to help others

- Question 1 sets the context for spiritual gifts: prayer, love and serving each other.
- Questions 2–3 look at the key verse about the use of spiritual gifts. If you need more help on this issue, see the notes in this book for Book 4: *Dealing with Doubt*, Study 4—Leader alert.
- Think spot (Question 4)—Allow a good space of time for this. Encourage each student to identify ministry gifts that they see in the other members of the group. Then take it in turn to remain silent while everyone else in your group bombards that person with their strengths. This can be a time of great encouragement as students realise how they've been gifted!
- Question 5 is an opportunity for each member to put this information into action.

### The ability to 'stick it out'

- Questions 6–8 are designed to help students to be able to stand strong for Jesus when others around them are giving them a hard time.

### Think it through

- Questions 9–11 continue on the topic of being strong when others pay them out. Be sensitive to what students say here—some of them might be dealing with some very hurtful situations. Show them how we can use our spiritual gifts to support each other in times like this.

### Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!

## STUDY 8 (1 Peter 5:1–14)

# STICKING AT IT ... TOGETHER!

### AIMS

To help students understand the biblical nature of the Church.

To help them to value the support they can get from their fellow Christians.

To help them to resist the temptations of the devil.

### Think spot

- Think spot (Question 1) will help your students to share their experiences—positive or negative—about being involved at church. Don't try and correct or criticise students' drawings; simply help them to express themselves.

### My life in my church

- Questions 2–3 are there to help them to understand the responsibility of leadership at church and their role in submitting to it.
- Questions 4–5 will further help your students share their positive and negative experiences of church.

### When the devil tries to get me

- Questions 6–11 will help your students to trust God, resist the devil and not give in to temptation.

### Think it through

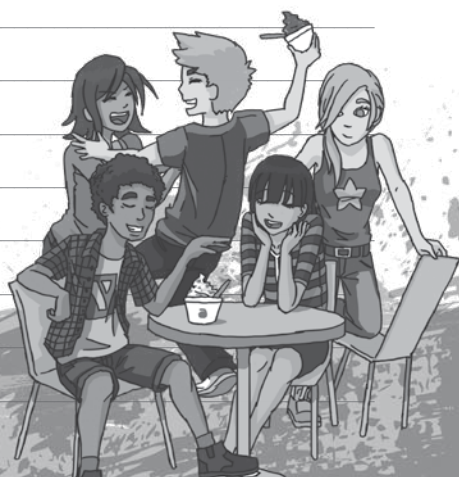
- Questions 12–14 are for you to reflect on the whole of 1 Peter. Celebrate as a group what God has taught you from this letter.

### Finish by praying

And reviewing your memory verses from previous books!



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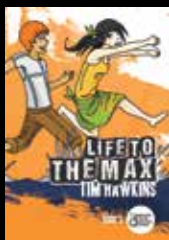


# STUDIES FOR JUNIOR HIGH

One of the most important things you will ever do as a youth leader is to disciple young people. The Growing Young Disciples series has been designed specifically to help youth in junior high (ages 11–14) come to know Jesus and grow in faith and godliness.

This Leader's Guide will equip you to lead your group through each of the five books; it not only provides answers to questions but also offers biblical context and key points to emphasise and teach. Tim Hawkins draws on his extensive youth ministry experience to give invaluable advice on how to train young people, hold them accountable, model for them what it means to be a disciple, and encourage them so that they can be active in ministry on Jesus' team.

## Growing Young Disciples series—Books 1–5



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Hawkins is one of the most experienced Christian youth pastors around. He's been a full-time youth pastor in Australia for over 40 years and has served as a missionary in Africa for the last decade. He is the author of 10 books on Christian ministry, and a large number of Bible studies. Tim's passion is to see high-schoolers become fervent disciples of Jesus and to take their place as active players on Jesus' ministry team. Tim and his wife Karen have been married for more than 40 years, are proud parents of Carly and Joshua and are grandparents of Billie and Bobby.



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