



## SESSION 1: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?



### Aim

To explain what 'the gospel' means and explore what its effect on our lives might be.



### Starter

At the centre of what Christians believe is something called 'the gospel', which literally means 'good news'. When we hear news, we must evaluate it to decide if it is true. Can you guess which of the following is fake news?

In 2020, US President Donald Trump, suggested that COVID-19 might be cured by:

**a) Injecting disinfectant into people**

b) Sitting on a special sunbed

c) Eating a diet of cheese pizza

Expand this activity by having pupils share three facts about themselves, one of which is false. The rest of the group should guess which fact is fake news.



### Video

Watch the video **What is the Gospel? (part 2)** (Running time 3:54)



### Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



### Exploring the Bible

The Bible is made up of 66 books of different genres, including four biographies of Jesus' life on earth. These biographies are called gospels and they help us get to know Jesus and why he is good news.

Mark is the name of one of the gospels, named after its author, and it starts with these words: "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." (Mark 1:1 NIV)

### Discuss

**If someone said to you, 'The biographies of Jesus are historically accurate,' how would you respond?** This question aims to encourage the young people to consider that the four gospels are reliable historical documents and therefore worthy of being explored.

## What do we learn about Jesus from Mark's opening statement?

*He is good news, he is God's son and he is the Messiah (someone promised from the beginning of the Bible – a man who would save God's people from oppression)*

In the video Andy Bannister said the good news about Jesus can be summarised in the statement, "Jesus is Lord". That may not sound immediately appealing since lords are generally considered to be people who are living a luxury existence detached from real life. As Andy said, Jesus asks people to give up control of how they live their lives and follow him. There is such an example in the story of some fishermen in Mark 1:17-18.

### Discuss

As time allows in your group look at one or more of these sections in Mark's biography of Jesus.

## What does Mark tell us about the power that Jesus has as Lord and how he uses it?

- ◆ Mark 1:29-34a: *Jesus has power to heal sick people and those possessed by evil spirits; he uses this power to care for people whom society would not have bothered with*
- ◆ Mark 4:35-41: *Jesus has power over nature and weather*
- ◆ Mark 5:21-24, 35-43: *Jesus has power over death, bringing people back to life*

## To whom are you happy to give a say in how you live your life? What qualities does that person have?

## How much is Jesus having a say about how you live your life?



### Reflection

Allow a time of reflection most appropriate to your group. You could use these words:

"Christians communicate with God by praying - that's talking as you would to anyone else. You can do that out loud or in your head.

If you would like to know the truth about who God is and why Jesus might be good news, why not use this quiet time of reflection to try praying? Ask God to show you the truth.

If not, use a few moments to reflect on what you have heard today about Jesus and his claims to be good news. The world is full of powerful people – how do they treat others? How does Jesus' particular care for people who the world thought insignificant measure up to that?"



### Further resources

You can read more of Mark's biography of Jesus in the following ways:

The whole Bible is free online at [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)

The [YouVersion Bible app](#) is free to download to your phone or tablet

The Gospel of Mark is also available in a format called [Uncover](#) that also comes with videos and questions for reflection.

To explore what prayer is for the first time, visit [trypraying.com](http://trypraying.com)

For more on the historical accuracy of Jesus' biographies, read *The Case for Christ* by Lee Strobel or watch the movie of the same name.