



GO DEEPER

SESSION 6: IF GOD APPEARED TO ME, I'D BELIEVE IN HIM



Aim

To explore the belief that if God appeared to them, people would be more likely to believe in him and to consider whether God is interested in our mere belief in him.



Starter

Print and cut out the activity cards on page 4 of this resource.

Hand out one or more cards to each pupil and give them time to consider whether they do or do not believe in the person or item on the card, and why. Ask them to think about what evidence they could put forward for their belief. For example:

- ◆ Is it something they have experienced with one or more of their senses?
- ◆ Have they heard or read about it from someone they trust?
- ◆ Does it have a measurable effect on their lives?

There is a mixture of items on the cards – some are scientifically verifiable, some are historically verifiable, some are neither, some are personal preference. Some things pupils will have personal experience of, but others they will not – does this make them less believable?

Now invite each pupil to share their thoughts in turn. Allow others to agree or disagree, or (if a quiet group) ask them to vote with their fingers on a scale of 1 finger = strongly disagree to 5 fingers = strongly agree.

If you have time, you may wish to continue the discussion. Today when expressing belief in things, we tend to be happiest with those which are scientifically verifiable. Where does that leave something like love or a personal preference for cheese?



Video

Watch the video [If God Appeared To Me, I'd Believe in Him](#) (Running time 4:24)



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

Read Mark 5:1-10

Discuss

In what ways does this passage in Mark's biography affirm Andy's comments that even the devil believes in God?

1. *The evil spirits do believe in Jesus since they address him as 'Son of the Most High God' (v.7). They believe he is God and has God's power as they beg him not to send them out (v.10).*
2. *The evil spirits do not have a good relationship with Jesus. They have inhabited this man and caused him to harm himself and be separated from others. We know from our encounters with Jesus that he cares for people and seeks to bring them together, not apart, so the evil spirits stand completely opposed to Jesus. They also beg Jesus not to torture them, indicating Jesus has power over them and he will not be exercising it for their benefit.*

If God is not interested in people merely believing in him, what is he interested in?

Read Mark 8:34-38

In the video, Andy Bannister said God does not merely want belief, he wants full surrender, for you to deny yourself and take up your cross.

Discuss

What does it mean for you to deny yourself and take up your cross daily?

Some examples:

1. *Spending time with God in prayer, in the Bible, with other Christians*
2. *Giving up my 'right' to decide what to do with time, talent and money*
3. *Being prepared to be ignored, mocked or persecuted for the gospel*
4. *Seeking to live a holy life (ask pupils to give examples of this) and to be transformed To be more like Jesus*

If a friend asked you to tell them what it is about Jesus which makes taking up your cross worthwhile, what would you say?

If pupils would like to back up their answers with Bible verses encourage them to do so.

Some examples:

1. *He is the creator of the world and knows what the best life looks like – following him may involve short term loss, pain or discomfort, but overall it is the best life we could have (John 10:10)*
2. *The biggest problem we face as humans is that we are deserving of punishment by God who is rightly angry at our sin. I may lose my life in following Jesus and taking up my cross but ultimately, he saves it. (Mark 8:35)*
3. *He is loving, kind and good! I may face challenges in this life that feel unbearable at the time, but he will never crush me (Isaiah 42:3)*
4. *If I remain in my comfort zone to avoid being mocked as a Christian then I will not be giving others a chance to hear about Jesus and his salvation (Romans 10:14). Knowing someone else is brought into God's kingdom makes my discomfort worthwhile.*



Reflection

Allow a time of reflection most appropriate to your group.

- ◆ You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:
- ◆ What would it look like for you this week to deny yourself and take up your cross? Ask God to help you think of areas in your life that he would like to transform your attitude about, and for specific actions you can take.
- ◆ What truths about God will help you persevere when things get hard? Consider memorising some Bible verses and reading a book on God's character.



Further resources

Don't Waste Your Life by John Piper is a book if you would like to be challenged further on denying yourself and taking up your cross.

Incomparable by Andrew Wilson, **None Like Him** by Jen Wilkin and **In His Image** also by Jen Wilkin are books on the character of God.



Print-and-Cut Activity Cards

GRAVITY	LOVE	RAIN
CHICKENPOX	EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR ME	$A_2 + B_2 = C_2$
WATER TURNS TO STEAM AT 100°C	BIPOLAR DISORDER	THERE IS NO OXYGEN IN SPACE
RACISM	BUDDHA	JULIUS CAESAR
POLIO	A LOVE OF CHEESE	RELATIONAL CHEMISTRY BETWEEN PEOPLE