

Session 1

THEME: JESUS WILL RETURN

CONNECT

Joining the IN:Tribe

Resources

Images of road signs or other signs the children will be familiar with.

Ice Breaker Activity

Talk together about signs you see when you are outside and say what they tell you. How many can you think of between you? You could bring some pictures of signs with you for the children to examine, too.

Discussion

⇒ Life is full of signs – why do you think people need signs? To warn us, guide us, direct us.

IN:Tribe Stands for Issachar Network Tribe. We are a group of people wanting to be like Issachar.

⇒ Does anyone know who Issachar was in the Bible? He was one of Joseph's brothers!

Issachar was also very special to his parents - his mum called him Issachar because it means "reward," and his dad said he was very strong and wise. So, what does this have to do with you? You are all very special, and, like Issachar, you have been chosen to be very strong and very wise.

In the time of this Bible verse, King David called up the entire Israelite army to join him on one of his missions to grow God's kingdom. They came in their different tribes, and here's what it says about one of these tribes:

"The men of Issachar knew the signs of the times and what to do." (1 Chronicles 12:32)

In other words, they were watching for signs of what was happening, and they knew what to do when they saw them in a similar way to how we knew the signs we discussed at the beginning and know what to do when we see them.

⇒ What signs do you think they were WATCHING for? War, who would be leading the country, what God was doing, challenges in the nation that may affect their family.

⇒ What did the men of Issachar understand? They understood what was going on at that time.

Read 1 Chronicles 12:32 and say it several times together (or take it in turns to say it).

TRUTH TO KNOW

Focus for our faith: Jesus is coming back!

Introduction

We want to help you know the Truth, and we are going to do our best to tell you what is true, but you don't just need to take our word. You need to read it in the Bible for yourself. So, each time we meet, we will open the Bible and read the Truth. This week's "Truth to Know" is found in Acts 1:9-11.

IN:Tribe Connect:

Remember that being in IN is like the Issachar Tribe: we are to know the signs of the times. We're also to know what to do.

We know Jesus is coming back.

We know when He returns He will be a Warrior and King.

- He will rescue His people from bad things happening to them.

We know Jesus said there would be signs that would tell us His return is soon.

- We should watch for the signs and stand firm when times are tough.
- We should be ready for Jesus to come back.

Did you know the Bible tells us the signs we are watching for and why? Get ready!

Background to this Bible passage

The twelve disciples had followed Jesus for three years. They spent all their time with Him. He was not only their teacher but a friend. They believed that Jesus was the one whom God had promised to send and expected him to stay with them forever.

The Unfolding Story (your interactive "teaching")

Read Acts 1:9-11.

Activity suggestion

Aim: To imagine what it was like for the early disciples when Jesus left.

Get the group to imagine that they are the disciples in this passage and stand frozen (like a photograph) as if Jesus has just gone up to Heaven. Think about what would they be feeling? For larger groups, split up and then see each other's freeze-frame.

Discuss

- ⇒ What do you think the disciples felt as they saw Him disappear (if you have done the freeze-frame activity above, you can skip to the next question)?

There are lots of answers here: troubled, confused, excited, worried, happy, abandoned, etc. Some of these you can see in the text; others will come out as they imagine being in the situation.

- ⇒ BUT the two men gave clues about Jesus coming back; they were signs. Reread these verses and see how many clues or signs you can find. He will come from Heaven, people

saw Him go and will see Him come, He will come back to the same place – the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem (you could show a picture of modern Jerusalem), it will be the same Jesus who was born, died and came alive again, He went into a cloud and will return in the clouds, angels (or two men!) were there and angels will come with Him, He will come back to His friends (that's us).

We will be talking again about these signs, and there are a lot more to come!

⇒ Would you like to know these so you are ready for Jesus' return? We'll find out more in Session 3.

⇒ What do you think the disciples felt when the angel told them He would come back?

⇒ What do you think or feel when you hear He is coming back? Encourage them to be real, e.g., Frightened, excited, skeptical, etc., and affirm them. The older they are, the more mixed their feelings might be. This is just Session 1 – there is plenty of time to process this, but John 14:1 has the affirmation of "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me."

⇒ Why do you think Jesus is coming back? Younger children will probably have limited insight, but after they have given their thoughts, you can give them a bigger picture:

Jesus is coming back to rule over the whole world as King. All who have died and loved Him will come with Him; He will win over every evil thing on this earth. All tears and unhappiness will be gone forever. He will rescue the Jewish people from enemies who try to harm them, and Satan will be defeated forever. We will rule with Him, and so many more exciting things will happen that we are going to find out about together.

⇒ What do you think about that?

READY TO GO

Thinking about how this affects our lives and how to respond to the signs we see.

The following Scripture talks about the day Jesus returns. Listen carefully and see if you can hear what we are to do.

Read Mark 13:32-37.

Jesus said that when He left, it was:

"Like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch."

⇒ What was the servant at the door supposed to look for? The man coming back.

⇒ Do we know exactly when Jesus is coming back? No.

But Jesus said He would give us signs so we can know when the time gets nearer. We don't want to miss them!

⇒ What have you learned Jesus is asking us to do as He prepares to return? Watch for Him coming, don't get tired of watching for Him.

Activity suggestion

Draw a picture of two people. One sleeping and the other one looking out of a window, waiting for Jesus to come back. Reflect on which person you would most like to be.

TIME FOR ACTION



1. "Stop and think" action point.

Take two minutes to think about Jesus coming back. Then, talk with Him about it and ask Him to help you understand and be ready.



2. "Pause to pray" action point.

Pray for people you know who do not know about Jesus and that He is coming back. Ask God for a chance to tell them.



3. "Go and do" action point.

What would you like to do to be ready for Jesus' exciting return (is there anything you want to do more of or do differently)? Jesus asks us to "stand firm" while we wait for His return. Pray together that He will help you.