



Christ before Christmas Outline Plan



Introduction

This would suit a group familiar with the Bible as it gives a different slant both on Christmas and to the selected stories. Groups with less Bible knowledge could either do a few bite-size clips such as stories 1, 6, 7, and 10 (see quiz document) or focus in detail on one account such as Samson's parents. Even with advanced groups you may not have the time to cover everything. We left out 3 and 4 for example.

Aim/s select from

- To enlarge their view of Jesus & take it beyond the 'baby in the manger' image.
- We didn't exist before we were born, but Jesus did. He is eternal.
- What will it be like to see Jesus?

Bible references

- John 6:46 – no one has seen God
- John 8:23, 56-57 – I am not of this world + 'I am who I am' long before Abraham was born
- John 14:9 – anyone who has seen me has seen the Father
- Genesis 3:8 Adam & Eve
- Genesis 15:17; Genesis 18 Abraham
- Genesis 16:6-14 Hagar
- Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob wrestled with God
- Exodus 3:1-6; 13:20-22; 33:18-23: Moses - burning bush; pillars of cloud & fire; behind the rock
- Joshua 5:13-15 Joshua just before the battle of Jericho
- Judges 6:11-24 Gideon met 'the angel of the Lord'
- Judges 13 Samson's parents met 'the angel of the Lord'
- Daniel 3:21-25 Three men were thrown into the fiery furnace but 4 were seen inside it -
- Ezekiel 1; Ezekiel's vision

Resources

Christ before Christmas quiz sheets; Bibles and pencils

www.revelationillustrated.com for images

www.biblegateway.com

Programme

Starter games select from

- Play the Mystery Guest game. Let someone choose a secret identity for themselves. The rest of the group has to guess who they are by asking questions to which the 'guest' gives yes or no answers.
- Play the board game 'Guess Who' in 2 teams if you have a small group.
- Play the game where everyone draws a head on a sheet of paper, then folds it down for the next person to draw the neck and so on until you reach the feet. Then unfold the papers to see some rather strange creatures.



Introduction select from

- Ask one or more of the following

Where does Jesus first appear in the Bible? (They may answer Christmas whereas it is in Genesis.)

Has anyone ever seen God?

- Think of someone who lived a long time ago. If one of your friends claimed to have met him, you'd think they were either joking or had gone insane.

Look at the passage in John 8 where Jesus claims that he is 'not of this world' and that he knew Abraham!

Jesus spoke about Abraham to the Pharisees one day and they remarked,

"You are not yet 50, how can you have seen Abraham?" John 8:56-58

So was he mad or does the Old Testament back up his claim?

None of us existed before we were born but Jesus did. Many scholars believe that he appears in the some of the Old Testament stories but under different names or titles such as 'the Angel of the LORD'.

It is possible that every time someone saw an appearance of God, it was Jesus. In John 6:46 Jesus said "No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. But there is also the possibility that some of these appearances were the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament we know for sure that the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove on one occasion and as tongues of fire on another. Most of the time he is an invisible presence everywhere.

- Look at the story of when Samson's parents met 'the Angel of the Lord' in 1 Samuel 13. (The dramatized Bible is an option for UK people here). I love this story because they were such ordinary down-to-earth people and they were speaking to him for ages before they realized who he was!

Approach

You could use a quiz sheet, a PowerPoint or stations around the room with verses printed out and a picture relating to the story.

Application

- How would you feel if your favourite celebrity walked through the door?
- How do you think these people felt when they realized that they were talking to God?
- If Jesus walked through the door right now, what would he look like? Would you recognize him?
- How do you feel about the idea that one day you will meet Jesus? How do you think you will react?

Song

I can only imagine: [Mercy Me](#) Bart Millard from MercyMe wrote "I Can Only Imagine" after the death of his father as a way to help himself heal. It is about finally meeting Jesus.

Surrounded by Your glory, what will my heart feel
Will I dance for You Jesus or in awe of You be still
Will I stand in Your presence or to my knees will I fall
Will I sing hallelujah, will I be able to speak at all
I can only imagine ...

[Mercy Me](#) Bart Millard - an extract

Writer: Brenda Lord; last updated 19 November 2015

Burning bush art is by Pat Marvenko Smith, © 1992. Visit www.revelationillustrated.com