

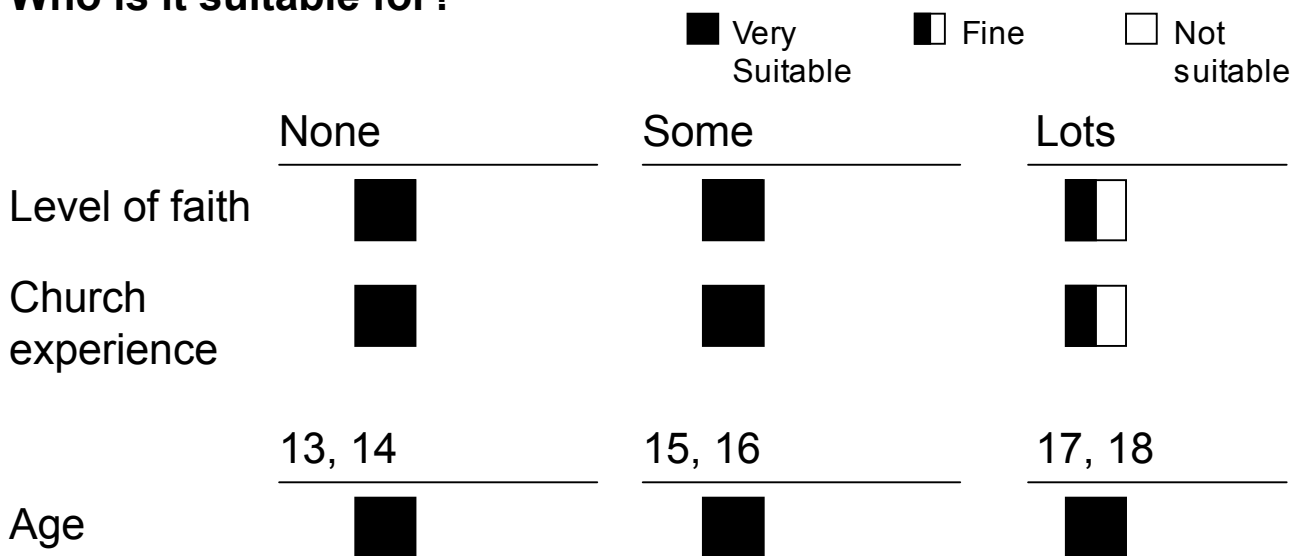
# TENT PRAYERS

## Two ways to live

### What is this all about?

An overview of (part of) the Christian message. It seeks to explain why the world is the way it is, why Jesus died and what choices that leaves us with.

### Who is it suitable for?



### Overview of the days please!!

- Sunday : Get to know each other
- Monday : God created the world
- Tuesday : We rebelled
- Wednesday : The penalty of rebellion is death
- Thursday : God sent his Son
- Friday : Jesus, the risen Lord

# TENT PRAYERS

## Advice for leading Tent Prayers (1/2)

### What is the point of Tent Prayers?

A successful tent prayers provides campers with the opportunity to get to know you and each other, to discuss their faith with each other in a friendly and fun environment and to learn together and from each about God.

### Five handy hints

#### (1) Meet in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)

- *Together*: Find a place where everyone feels part of one single group. I would recommend sitting in one circle so that everyone can see each other. It helps if everyone is sitting on the same level (avoid having some on the floor and some on seats). Try not to have anything in the middle of the group like a table (feel free to rearrange the any of the marquees to make the right space for your group).
- *Out of the tent*: Definitely leave the tent. A tent is a bad place to have tent prayers. Campers can't really see each other very well and they get really distracted with their belongings. They also tend to fall asleep! Even if it's raining, don't be tempted to meet in the tent. Take some chairs out of the chapel or main marquee and put them up in field. Or meet in the chapel, lounge, teaside or main marquee.
- *Private*: Try to find a space not too near another group so that your campers will be able to talk in private and won't be too distracted by each other!

#### (2) Prepare

Prepare what you are going to do in advance. Decide at the beginning of the week which tent leader is going to take responsibility for leading each day. In preparing, you can use the material in this booklet. Everything marked with an **R** is recommended, everything marked **O** is optional. You will need to think what is most appropriate for your campers. You will not have time to do everything!

#### (3) Stop talking!

As much as possible get the campers talking. Ask them what *they* think, ask them what *they* think of what each other has said. If you are not leading the session, try not to talk at all!!

#### (4) Be yourself

Be yourself with the campers. If you want the campers to share their personal stories and views, then you need to lead by example (without talking too much!!)

#### (5) Have fun and let it flow

You're not at school. And even if you were, people learn better if they're enjoying themselves! Having banter and playing games are a critical part of tent prayers – not a waste of time!! Also don't worry too much about covering all the material you have planned if the campers get into a debate or discussion. It is fine to go where the energy is.

# Advice for leading Tent Prayers (2/2)

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Do I have to use all the time?**

A: No, definitely not. It is much better to have a really good 15 minute session, than a 30 minute session that drags. However, if you find time is dragging I would encourage you to spend the extra time playing games or walking to the beach together as then you are getting to know each other!

**Q: How do I get them out of bed?**

A: First of all, expect them to get out of bed. Expect them to do what you say. You are their authority figure and they will tend to do what you say, if you make it clear that you expect them to. However if you appear unsure whether they will do what you say, then they will realise that and not do it. On this basis, tell them what you want them to do and then assume they will do it. When it comes to getting out of bed, give them advance notice of what you expect them to do: i.e. when and where you expect them to be. (You can give them a choice about where they want tent prayers to be – but not in the tent!!) Having told them to get up, try not to hover over them. If you hover, they will feel that you don't believe they are going to do what you say. If they are being very slow go back and tell them once – act amazed that they haven't got up. If they continue to take ages get some 1 on 1 time with them afterwards, ask why they were so late and explain that it is important that they are there on time. If you have any problems here, talk to a Cheese

# TENT PRAYERS

## Sunday: Get to know each other (1/2)

### AIM OF THE SESSION

- Get to know each other a little. Help the campers to feel comfortable with each other and with you by getting them talking (about anything!!)
- Explain what you will be doing in Tent Prayers each morning.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

#### R Get together

- Get everyone together in a TOP place (Together, Out of the tent and Private)
- Explain that you have until breakfast at 9am to have a bit of time to get to know each other.

#### R Get to know each other

- Find out a bit about each other. One way to do this is to 'Go round the circle' (described below)

#### 'Go round the circle:'

- Go round the circle asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
  - Their name
  - Where they come from
  - Their favourite TV show as a kid (alternatively their yuckiest food, best dream, ideal job)
- Go round the circle again asking everyone to say: (leaders should do this too)
  - Whether they've come to camp before
  - How they ended up coming this time
  - What they want to get out of the week

#### O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. It helps to lighten the tone. (I would strongly recommend it – I found it worked with all the boys tents I ever led and girls aren't that different really, are they?!!!!).

#### Possible games (all explained in more detail in the appendix)

- Yee-ha
- 'Question, Question'
- Monkey Fight
- The 'Yes, No game'
- Call my bluff

# TENT PRAYERS

## Sunday: Get to know each other (2/2)

### R Explain Tent Prayers

- Explain that you'll be meeting every day at 8.30 for Tent Prayers.
- Explain what the point of Tent Prayers is – a chance to get to know our tent and to discuss together some of our thoughts about God.
- Ask them if they would be interested in leading it themselves and say you will be asking one of them later today if they would like to lead it tomorrow. (don't forget to do this!!)

### O Read a Bible Verse

- You may want to use a bible verse to illustrate how the aim of tent prayers and camp as a whole is to find out about God

#### Verses about finding out about God



- Luke 19 v1-4: Zacchaeus was prepared to climb a tree to find out about Jesus. Camp is a great opportunity to 'climb a tree'
- Matthew 7 v7: This passage tells us to you Ask and it will be given, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened. Camp is great chance to have a go at asking, seeking and knocking.

### O Find out where you're all at

- You may want to take a moment to find out where you campers are at in their faith. The best way to do this is to use an appropriate analogy which gives everyone an opportunity to say where they are. The football analogy below works well with boys, but there are plenty of others.
  - The Football Analogy: One way to think about faith is think about a football pitch. On a football pitch, you've got your strikers (who are zooming around, everything going well – they might score at any moment). You've got your midfielders (who are doing pretty well too, they're just a bit further back from the strikers but they also might score). You've got your defenders (who are much further back from the action, but they have moments when they get further forward, and they are on the pitch). You've also got the substitutes who are not on the pitch. And then there's the supporters who aren't in a team and aren't likely to get on the pitch. If the strikers are people who feel very strongly about their faith in God, the midfielders less so etc, etc, where would you put yourself?
  - You can also use a train station analogy (are you on the train, thinking of getting on the train, buying a ticket, thinking of buying a ticket, in the car park, at home etc.). There are lots of others – feel free to be imaginative.
- Explain the analogy and give everyone a chance to say where they are at. Make sure you say where you are at. Don't start with the keenest bean otherwise campers will feel that they have to say they are doing brilliantly with God and will be embarrassed to say otherwise. The key thing is to get them opening up about this stuff just a little!

### R Close

- One of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

Props: A piece of paper and pen for each camper/leader

## TENT PRAYERS

### Monday: God created the world (1/2)

#### R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other



#### O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

#### R Explain what you're doing in tent prayers

- Explain that you're going to try to do a six day overview of part of the Christian faith. You're going to start today by thinking about the Christian belief that God created the world

#### O Thinking about creation

- Tell the campers that you're going to spend a bit of time thinking about creation. Ask the campers to spend a few moments in silence looking around at the beauty of creation. Warn them that afterwards, you are going to ask them what strikes them as particularly beautiful about creation.
- Ask the campers what struck them as particularly beautiful about creation?
-  Ask the campers if there is one place in the world that they think is most beautiful –
-  maybe somewhere they have been or somewhere they would most like to go? What is it about it that makes them think it is beautiful?

#### R Discuss creation



Ask the campers to read Genesis Chapter 1 v 1-31



If you asked people on the street, 'How was the world made?', what sort of different answers do you think you would get?



Do you think that science means that we can't believe that God created the world? (Let the campers discuss their different views – use the notes in the box only if you need to)

It is clear that science is not compatible with a literal reading of Genesis – science shows us that the world was not made in seven days. But most theologians do not believe that Genesis was written to be taken literally (it reads more like poetry), and the Hebrew word for day also means 'a period of time'. If Genesis is more poetry telling us that God created the world, rather than literal truth then it is very compatible with modern science. In fact, many scientists believe in a God who created and intervenes in the world (40% agreed in a recent survey).

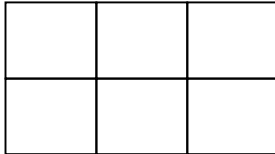
For many, advances in science point to a creator. The Big Bang clearly leaves a question as to 'what started the bang?' – a question physicists admit they cannot answer - many believe that the Big Bang points to a creator God who started the Bang. Furthermore, it has become increasingly clear that for the Big Bang to result in human life a remarkable number of factors had to be in place (e.g., a certain force of gravity, the certain maximum speed of light). Scientists are unsure why these things happened to be exactly the way they needed to be to create mankind. Many believe that you either have to believe in there being an infinite number of universes (and ours just happens to be the one where all these factors are the way they need to be for life) or you have to believe in a creator. Unsurprisingly 40% go for the creator!

Props: Big piece of paper, a pen.

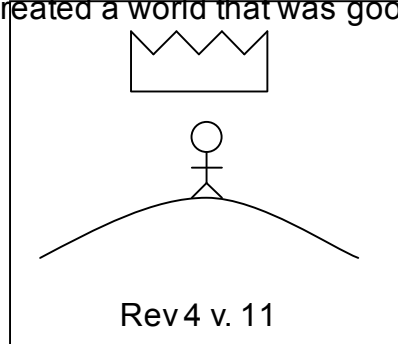
## Monday: God created the world (2/2)

### R Draw the first picture

- Explain that each day you will draw a picture to represent what Christian belief you have discussed
- Give each camper a piece of paper and a pen. Get them to turn their page sideways (so it is 'landscape' not 'portrait'). Then they divide the page into six drawn boxes, as below:



- Get them to draw the first picture in the first box (the box in the top right). The picture is as below. Explain that this means that 'God created the world and, as creator, rules over it. He created a world that was good.'



- At the bottom of the picture you can add a Bible verse: Rev 4 v 11. (Which is "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, or you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.")
- Explain that you will draw a picture a day, so they need to keep hold of their bits of

### O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

#### Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders of a couple of the campers could pray these things

### R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

# TENT PRAYERS

Props: Big piece of paper, a pen.

## Tuesday: We rebelled

### R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

### O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

### R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- [?] Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers. Get them to bring out their diagrams to help with this.

### O What is wrong with the world?

- Remind the campers that yesterday you looked at the fact that God made a world that was good. But there are clearly many things about it today that are not good. Ask them to brainstorm (they might want to think together in pairs first) some of the things that are wrong with the world today. You could write down the things that they come up with on a big piece of paper.

### R What is the cause?

- [?] If you asked people at school why there were things wrong with the world what possible reasons do you think they would give?

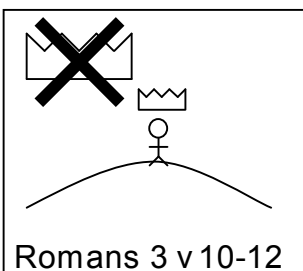


Read Genesis 3

- Explain that the Bible tells us that the ultimate cause of the things that are wrong in the world is the fact that we have rejected God as ruler and decided to think of only ourselves. The bible calls 'thinking only of ourselves' "sin".

- [?] How many of the problems with the world today (that your group came up with if they did the previous section) are caused by sin?

### R Draw the second picture



Romans 3 v 10-12

- The second picture means, we have crossed out God as being in charge and have decided to be in charge ourselves, thinking often only of ourselves
- The Bible tells us that we have all done this. Romans 3 v 11 says, "There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no-one who understands, no-one who seeks God. All have turned away."

### O But are we all really that bad?

- [?] Do you think we are all utterly evil?

- [?] Are some people better than others?

The Bible tells us we are all made in God's image – therefore we were created good. Many Christians believe there is still much good in us even if we don't know God (the Bible tells us of people who didn't know God doing very good things eg, Rahab – a prostitute – hides people of God who need her help). However, just because we have some good in us, does not mean God can ignore our rebellion. And just because some of us are better than others, it does not mean we meet God's

# TENT PRAYERS

## Wednesday: The penalty of rebellion is death

### R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

### O Play a game

- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

### R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- [?] Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers. Get them to bring out their diagrams to help with this.
- [?] Remind them that yesterday you looked at how we had all turned away from God. Ask the campers what they think happens as a consequence of this.

### O Why does God care so much about our rebellion?

- [?] Before the session, cut the next page in this booklet into three sections and put them in three envelopes.
- Ask the campers, why they think God cares so much about our rebellion.
- Hand out the envelopes to three different campers and ask them to read out what is inside them. Each envelope gives one of the reasons why God cannot just ignore our rebellion.
- If you have time, discuss these reasons.

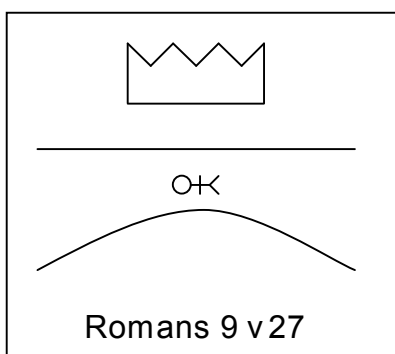
### R The penalty of sin is death



Read Romans 6 vs 23

- The trouble with removing God as king, and acting as though we are in charge is ... that God is actually in charge!! As God is a holy god, the bible tells us that he cannot accept our rebellion.

### R Draw the third picture



- The third picture means that although we have rebelled, God is still King and that the result of our rebellion is both separation from God (hence the line) and also death
- The verse to remember here is Hebrews 9v27: Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement.

Wednesday Tent Prayers do not always happen. If there is no time, shorten the content and combine it with either Tuesday or Thursday.

## TENT PRAYERS

### Wednesday – cut-outs for discussion

#### Why does God care so much about our rebellion?

##### Because he is SO holy and true holiness cannot stand evil

- The Old Testament tells us that God was so holy that only the holiest of priests could go into the part of the Temple where God was thought to reside
- After Moses spoke to the LORD, the Bible tells us that his face was radiant. God was that holy.
- Exodus 33 v19-23: When God passed by Moses, Moses had to hide in a rock so as not to see God's face – because God was too holy for Moses to see him and live.
- Isaiah 55 v8-9: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts."

#### Why does God care so much about our rebellion?

##### Because he is SO passionate about justice

- "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless of the widow" [Deuteronomy 24 v17]
- "The Lord is known by his justice" [Psalm 9 v16]
- "The Lord loves righteousness and justice" [Psalm 33 v5]
- "The Lord is a God of justice" [Isaiah 30 v18]

Note: The justice that God is passionate about is not the blind unemotional justice of our law-courts. It is a passionate hatred of evil. A longing for good to be done. This is what the people who were alive when the Old Testament was written would have understood by God's passion for justice.

#### Why does God care so much about our rebellion?

##### Because he wants good things for us and knows that our rebellion will result in disaster for us – that without him our world and our lives are not complete

- Without God the world and our lives are not complete
  - Jesus' story of Prodigal son tells the story of a son rejecting his Father's support and how everything goes wrong. In the story, we are the son and the father is God [Luke 15 v 11-31]
  - "You were dead in transgressions and sins ... like the rest we were by nature the object of wrath." [Ephesians 2 v 1,4]
- God wants good things for us
  - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."
  - "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him." [Romans 8v28]
  - "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" [Philippians 1v6]

# TENT PRAYERS

## Thursday: God sent his son (1/2)

### R Have a chat

- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

### O Play a game

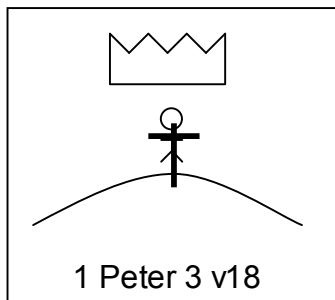
- If appropriate play a game. For possible games, see the appendix.

### R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

- [?]** Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers
- Remind the campers that yesterday you thought about the fact that as we have rebelled we face death and separation from God. But because God loves us he wanted to do something about this ...

### R Draw the fourth picture and explain

- Draw the fourth picture, explaining what it means ...



- There was however one person who did live a life where God was put first. This man was Jesus.
- He lived a perfect life on the earth under God but was put to death by an unjust world. He died on a cross.
- In his death, he took the punishment for our wrong-doing – our sin. As a result the punishment is paid – and we are forgiven!
- A good verse for this is 1 Peter 3 v18

**[?]** Have the campers heard this before?

**[?]** What do they think of it? Do they think it is right?

### O Two other ways to illustrate it

- Another way to illustrate it is to put out your right hand (empty). This is us, we have a free relationship with God. However our sin gets in the way of that relationship (put a book in your right hand). When Jesus died he took that sin upon himself (place the book on the left hand). When he rose again he destroyed this sin forever (remove the book). From now on, we can have a proper relationship with God again.
- Ask a camper to read Matthew 27 v 50-51.

**[?]** Ask the campers why Matthew decided to mention that the curtain had torn in

two?  
The curtain divided the main area of the temple from the holiest area known as the 'holy of the holies'. Only the holiest priest was allowed in here. When Jesus dies, the fact that the curtain has torn in two, means that anyone can go into the holiest area and meet with

### R <sup>God</sup> Is this fair?

- [?]** Do you think it is fair that we are forgiven like this? Is it fair if everyone is forgiven like this? Even Hitler or Stalin??
  - Ask campers to read out 1 Timothy 2v4 (makes the point that God wants all to be saved)
  - You could also read the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 v 11-32 (the older brother feels that the forgiveness and acceptance of the younger son is unfair!)

# TENT PRAYERS

## Thursday: God sent his son (2/2)

### R Jesus' words on the cross

- ? Ask one of your campers to read Matthew 27 v 45+46
- ? Why do you think Jesus says this? Why does he feel that God has forsaken him?

One eminent theologian (Karl Barth) has suggested that Jesus feels forsaken because he has the sin of the world on him at this moment. This sin has separated him from his Father for the first time in his life. Therefore he feels forsaken.

### O A death predicted

- You might want to start closing your session, by reflecting on the amazing fact that Jesus' death was predicted around 600 years before by Isaiah
- Ask a camper to read Isaiah 53

### O Pray

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

#### Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders or a couple of the campers could pray these things

### R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

# TENT PRAYERS

## Friday: Jesus, the risen Lord (1/2)

### R Have a chat

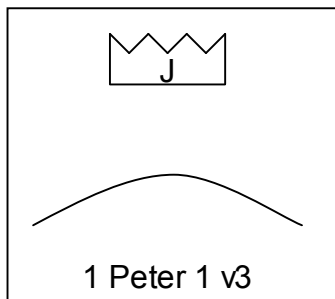
- Take time to ask how people slept and what they thought of yesterday
- There is no need to hurry through this bit – it is important to get to know each other

### R Reminder of yesterday's tent prayers

? Ask the campers what you did yesterday in tent prayers

### R Draw the fifth picture

- Draw the fifth picture, explaining what it means ...



- After dying, that was not the end. Jesus rose the dead to prove that he had conquered death and sin.
- He went to rule in heaven with his Father.
- A good verse for this is 1 Peter 1 v 3

### O How do we know Jesus rose from the dead?

? Ask the campers what other theories might be and what they think of them.

A number of different theories have been put forward, but they all have real flaws:

#### Theory

#### Flaws

(1) Jesus was never dead

having  
3 hours?

The Romans clearly thought he was

How did he move the big rock across his tomb

been flogged and hung on a cross for

How would he convince the disciples he was the

conqueror of death – he would have looked terrible!

(2) The disciples stole the body

How would they get past the guard on the tomb?

Why would they go to their deaths for a lie?

(3) The Romans or Pharisees  
stole the body

Why didn't they just produce the body then to prove  
that he was not risen from the dead when his  
followers started saying that he was risen?

“When you remove the non-credible options, whatever you have left – no matter how incredible – must be the truth” [Arthur Conan Doyle] The most credible view in my opinion is that he Jesus did indeed rise from the dead.

# TENT PRAYERS

## Friday: Jesus, the risen Lord (2/2)

### O What impact does it have on us that Jesus rose from the dead?

? Ask the camper what impact they think the news of Jesus' resurrection had on the disciples?

? Were the disciples expecting Jesus to rise from the dead?

The Gospel accounts suggest that the disciples did not even expect Jesus to die, let alone to rise from the dead.

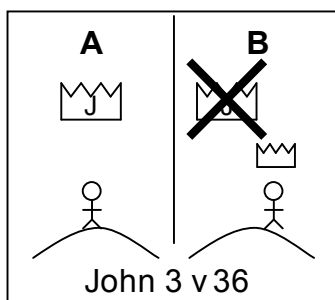
? How did the disciples respond to his death? Get a camper to read Matthew 26 v 69-75: Peter disowns Jesus

? What were the disciples like after his resurrection? Get a camper to read Acts 2 v 42-47: The disciples after Jesus has risen (and the Holy Spirit has come to them)

? What impact therefore do you think the resurrection should have on us?

### R Draw the last picture

- Draw the sixth picture, explaining what it means ...



- This gives us two ways to live.
- We can either choose A: Admit that we have rebelled against God. Accept Jesus' offer of forgiveness. Try to live our lives with Jesus as LORD (we are hearing more this week about how Jesus wants us to live our lives)
- Or we can choose B: Refuse to have Jesus as LORD and instead stay in charge of our own lives. The trouble with this is that we still have no way of regaining our relationship with God – which is what we were made for. And therefore we are still separated from God.
- A good verse for this is John 3 v 36

- Say that you will try to make time to discuss where they feel they are in discussions during the day. (note: don't do this without another leader in the same room and within

### O Pray (eyesight)

- If there is time and it is appropriate you might want to ask if the campers want to pray about anything. There are different ways you can do this.

#### Possible ways to pray

- Say you're all going to pass around an object to the left and when you have it in your hand you can say a prayer either out loud or in your head
- Ask the campers if there is anything they think it would be good to pray for and then either the leaders of a couple of the campers could pray these things

### R Close

- If you haven't prayed already, one of the leaders should say a short prayer.
- Then remind everyone about the morning session and dash off to breakfast!

## Appendix: Games

### 1 Yee-Haw

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask Jonny Hopper or Mikey Walker to explain it to you

### 2 Question, Question

- Two people play at a time
- Person 1 asks Person 2 a question. Person 2 needs to respond with a question (that makes sense as a response!). Person 1 has to then respond to that with a question, etc.etc.
- The first person not to be able to respond with a question that makes sense as a response without pausing for too long loses!
- Winner stays on!

### 3 The Yes, No Game

- Everyone plays at once
- One person is selected to be 'on'. That person is then asked questions by everyone else in any order. They must answer every question without saying Yes or No (or any version of these words – e.g. Yep, Nope.) They are also not allowed to shake or nod their head. They are not allowed to ignore questions. Once they say one of these words, their go is over and a new person is 'on'.
- The person who lasts the longest wins. (if anyone lasts 60 seconds, you might want to stop and declare them a winner)

### 4 Monkey Fight

- Everyone plays at once
- Great fun – but easier to explain face to face! Ask John Tomlinson, Andrew Tomlinson or Jon Yates to explain it to you!

### 5 Call my bluff

- Everyone plays at once
- Get one person to come up with three (or four) statements about themselves. One of these should be a lie and the rest should be true. They then tell everyone the statements in any order without telling the group which is the lie. The group then has to vote on which they think is the lie.
- You could play this everyday which a different person doing it everyday. However, you will need to give campers advance notice that they need to come up with some statements or the game will take forever!!