

JESUS IS...BIBLE STUDIES



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STUDY 1: TRANSFORMED BY JESUS

Can you think of some examples where a person's life has radically changed? Why did it change?

What is the book of Philippians? Who is writing it and who is it written to?

Read Philippians 3:1-16

Who are the dogs in v2? Why does Paul warn the Philippians about them?

Why does Paul glorify Christ Jesus in v3? What might that look like in his everyday life?

What might it look like to our friends and family if we glorify Christ Jesus in our lives?

Make a list of the things that gave Paul confidence in the flesh? Make a list of the things that people today are tempted to put their confidence in?

Paul's confidence in the flesh	People's confidence today

How do those things that Paul put his confidence in compare to Jesus Christ?

What is it about Jesus Christ that Paul desires?

Using your knowledge of Paul's life and ministry how does he live his life now that he knows Jesus Christ?

In Phil 3:10-16 what is the prize that continues to drive him forward to overcome the many obstacles put in his path?

Has your life been transformed by the wonder of knowing Jesus Christ? If so how?

What is the best thing for you about knowing Jesus Christ?

Does this transformation flow out into every area of your life? If so how?

Does the heavenly prize drive your life onwards? Has it helped you overcome obstacles in your life?

EXERCISE: PERSONAL TESTIMONY

In Philippians 3:1-16 Paul gives his own story about how Jesus Christ has changed his life. In the past he put his confidence in being a zealous Jew who obeyed the Pharisaic law to the letter. But now he has entered into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ which has given him new purpose and meaning to everything he does.

Spend a few moments writing out how knowing Jesus Christ has transformed your life. You may have known Jesus Christ all of your life and so the transformation that you have experienced has been more gradual. Or you may have come to know Jesus Christ later in life and so you can see the difference in your life both before and after. Some questions are below to help you write out your own personal testimony. Spend some time next week sharing what you have written.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY TYPE 1: KNOWING CHRIST MOST OF YOUR LIFE

What contributed to your growing up knowing Christ?

How has knowing Jesus Christ shaped your life and the decisions that you have made?

What are the moments in your life where you have grown in your relationship with Jesus?

PERSONAL TESTIMONY TYPE 2: COMING TO KNOW CHRIST LATER IN LIFE

What was your life like before you knew Christ?

What was it about Jesus Christ that attracted your interest?

How has knowing Jesus Christ transformed your life?

STUDY 2: THE RELUCTANT EVANGELIST

What are some of the things that make us reluctant to talk about Jesus?

Read Jonah 1

What does the Lord tell Jonah to do? Why?

What might happen to Nineveh if it hears the message of the Lord?

What does Jonah decide to do? (See the Map below)



Why does Jonah decide to flee?

What happens to Jonah when he is in the ship on the sea? Why?

What is Jonah's solution?

In verse 13 the sailors decide to row back to the land. But if the Lord is sovereign over the sea and storm why did he not let the sailors return to the land?

Read Jonah 2

Why does Jonah pray?

What does the Lord save Jonah from?

Why does Jonah need to experience the salvation of the Lord?

How can Jonah's experience help us in our reluctance to talk about Jesus?

Read Colossians 4:2-6

What does it mean to make the most of every opportunity?

Have there been situations where you have been tempted to flee like Jonah?

How are we to speak about Jesus?

What image comes to mind when you think of an evangelist? What words would you use?

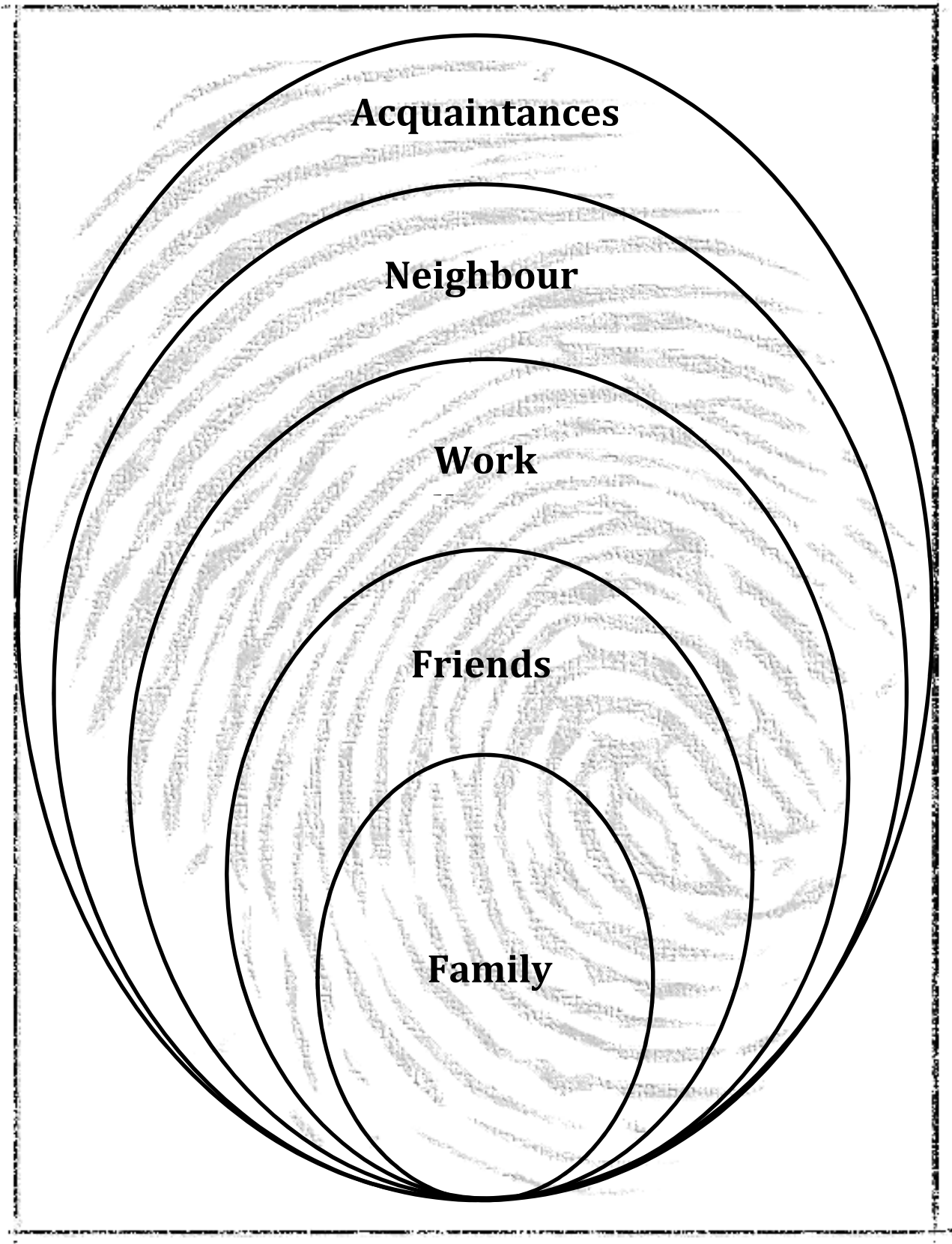
Write down the name of one person who strongly influenced you to become a Christian

What words best describe this person?

What did they say or do that made a difference?

EXERCISE: RELATIONAL THUMBPRINT

Every day we come into contact with people in the different parts of our lives. It can be helpful to be aware of who those people are so that we can pray for them and seek to make the most of every opportunity in our relationships with them. Take a few moments to list all the people in the various areas of your life.



STUDY 3 – LOST PEOPLE NEED SAVING

Is there a person in your life that you could never envisage becoming a Christian?

Read Jonah 3:1-4

What does the Lord command Jonah?

Why is Nineveh an important city?

What is the message that Jonah preached to them?

Read Nahum 3:1-7

What is Nineveh like in the book of Nahum?

If Nineveh is similar in the days of Jonah how might you expect them to respond to the message that Jonah preached?

Read Jonah 3:5-10

What do the Ninevites do when they hear Jonah's message? What does the king of Nineveh do?

Is their repentance genuine?

What does God decide to do? Why?

What is the message that we preach today?

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

What is the gospel?

What are the similarities/differences with the message that Jonah preached?

Read Mark 1:14-15

What is the right response to the gospel?

Have you ever seen or heard someone respond to the gospel this way that you never would have expected to?

Read Rom 10:8-15

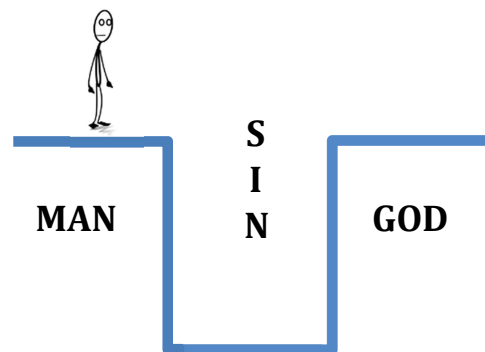
Do you believe that the Lord can save all people?

Why are the feet of those who bring the good news considered to be beautiful?

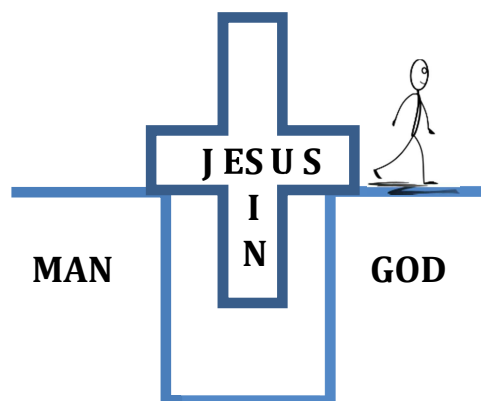
EXERCISE: THE BRIDGE DIAGRAM

When sharing the gospel with someone it is helpful to have a few tools in your back pocket. A very effective tool is the bridge diagram because it summarises the gospel using pictures in a simple and easy to understand manner. Have a look below. Memorise the steps and have a go of sharing the diagram with each other as practice. Then set yourself the challenge of aiming to share the Bridge Diagram with at least one non-Christian.

1. We are separated from God because of our sin



2. Jesus died upon the cross to save us from our sins and to bring us into relationship with God



For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 6:23)

STUDY 4 – WE NEED TO CHANGE TO WELCOME THE LOST

Imagine that you turned up at a church for the first time. What things would make you believe that the church wanted to welcome newcomers? What things would make you believe that they didn't want to welcome newcomers?

Read Jonah 4:1-11

Why does Jonah become angry?

What does Jonah pray to the Lord? What does he acknowledge about God?

What is Jonah's attitude?

While Jonah is sitting outside the city what does God do?

What is Jonah's response?

What is God trying to teach Jonah? What is the connection between the vine and Nineveh?

What is the difference between Jonah's attitude towards Nineveh and God's attitude towards Nineveh?

Read Luke 15:11-32

What does the father do when the younger son returns?

What is the attitude of the older son?

How does our attitude affect the way we relate to the lost?

How is our attitude toward the lost reflected at church?

EXERCISE: GOD TALK

Our everyday conversation is an important part of who we are. What we talk about indicates what is important to us, what we value and what we spend our time doing. We are under increasing pressure in our secular world to leave God and religion out of our conversation. But one of the wonderful ways that we can witness to the lost people of this world is to simply include in our everyday conversation what is important to us, what we value and how we spend our time. If we have been saved by the blood of Jesus and given the hope of eternal life then that will include talking about our Christian faith and how that is shaping our life.

We can do this naturally in a variety of conversations with people from all walks of life. It doesn't have to be a full gospel explanation but a simple acknowledgment of how God is at work in your life. For example, on Monday when one of your co-workers asks you how your weekend was you can reply, "I had a great day with the family on Saturday down at the beach. And then on Sunday we went to church together and heard a great talk from a handsome preacher about how Jesus raised a man from the dead."

God talk is an easy way of including God and his work in your life into your everyday conversations rather than censoring him out. By doing this we are letting people know what is really important to us, we are communicating that we are a disciple of Jesus, and we make it easier for those that we have conversations with to ask further questions about the gospel. The subject is on the table so to speak. Who knows maybe our co-worker will ask the follow up question, "Do you really believe that Jesus raised a man from the dead?" and then further conversation can ensue.

So to help us get into the habit of using God Talk in our everyday conversations take a few moments to practice. Split up into pairs and do some role playing. Come up with two situations, one person pretends to be the Christian and one person pretends to be the non-Christian, and practice using God Talk in your conversations. Then come up with two more situations and reverse your roles.

STUDY 5: WE LOVE THE LOST

In 1943 Maslow developed his hierarchy of needs.



While Maslow's theory has largely been replaced today within clinical psychology what are the basic needs of a human being? What is the connection between a person's spiritual needs and physical needs?

Read Luke 9:10-17

What are the apostle's reporting to Jesus about?

Why did Jesus and the Apostle's withdraw to Bethsaida?

When the crowds found out and followed how might Jesus have felt towards the people since they derailed his original plans to withdraw?

How does Jesus respond to them in the passage?

In verse 11 what is the Kingdom of God and why is Jesus speaking about it? How do his miracles of healing support his message?

What basic need is Jesus providing for in verse 11?

What basic human need were the apostle's concerned about in verse 12

How does Jesus propose they solve the problem? Why does he give them this command in verse 13?

How does Jesus provide the solution to the problem?

How is it possible that so much food becomes available from so little?

What basic need does Jesus provide for here?

What is his attitude towards the lost people of Israel?

What is our attitude towards the lost people of Mona Vale and the surrounding suburbs?

Are our neighbours aware of their physical and spiritual needs?

How can we, as ambassadors of Jesus Christ, help our neighbours meet their needs?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

How does Paul meet the spiritual needs of those he preaches to?

What does it look like to be Christ's ambassadors?

EXERCISE: CONTACT LIST

We can look around us and see a crowd of people who are lost like what Jesus saw in Bethsaida, and we can be overwhelmed about where to even start. That is why it can be helpful to break down God's mission field into bite sized chunks so that it doesn't seem so overwhelming. To do that you can put together a contact list of 3 people that you would especially like to focus upon and provide for their physical and spiritual needs.

Those 3 people can come from any area of your life and you might like to have a look at your relational thumbprint to help you choose. By putting together a contact list it is easier to regularly pray for those people, to be deliberate in your relationship with them, and to look for opportunities to chat with them about Jesus. You can even pray for these people as a regular part of your Bible Study prayer time. So take a few moments to fill out the table below and think through what it would look like to love these people as Jesus loved the crowds.

Names	Points of Contact
1.	a. b. c.
2.	a. b. c.
3.	a. b. c.

STUDY 6: LIVING SACRIFICIALLY FOR THE LOST

What are the different leadership styles? Which one is the most effective and why?

Read Mark 10:32-34

What would eventually happen to Jesus in Jerusalem?

Why would Jesus go through this? Who is he doing this for?

What does this communicate about what it means to be God's king?

In verse 32 as they are travelling towards Jerusalem why is Jesus walking ahead and the disciples trailing behind? What does this demonstrate about Jesus' leadership style/ability?

Read Mark 10:35-45

How do James and John attempt to trap Jesus? Why do they do this?

Why do they want to sit at Jesus' right and left in glory? What is their motivation and who are they thinking of?

Can you see a similar attitude in today's day and age?

Read Isaiah 51:17-23

What is the cup in Isaiah 51?

In Mark 10:38 what is Jesus referring to when he speaks about the cup?

Read Luke 12:50

What is the baptism that Jesus is distressed about?

In Mark 10:38 what is the baptism that Jesus is referring to?

Why does Jesus say that James and John must drink the cup that he drinks and be baptised with the baptism that he is baptised with?

What does this reveal about what it means to follow God's king? Why might someone do this?

In verse 39 what does the response of James and John reveal about their understanding of Jesus' words?

Jesus calls his disciples together and he teaches them about the differences between leaders of the world and leaders in the God's kingdom. In the table below list of the differences between these two types of leadership.

Leaders in the World	Leaders in God's Kingdom

Jesus suffered and died so that the lost people of this world could be saved and he taught his disciples to do likewise. If we were to reflect a similar sacrificial discipleship for the lost what would it look like? What would you find difficult to give up in your home, work, or church life?

What type of suffering might we endure today in doing this?

Jesus taught his disciples that to be great in the kingdom of God requires a willingness to die a death like his for the sake of the lost. We know from Christian history that all of the disciples were martyred for the sake of the lost except for John. Would you be willing to die a death like Jesus for the sake of the lost?

EXERCISE: JESUS IS...ROLE PLAY

One of the areas of focus for the Jesus is... campaign is conversational evangelism. One of the unique benefits of conducting a campaign like this is that each of us can engage the lost people of this world personally and naturally. Our intention is to publicise the phrase Jesus is... throughout Mona Vale and the surrounding suburbs so that people's interest will be sparked. One of the most effective ways of doing that is for each of us to wear a Jesus is...T-shirt. By doing this we are making it clear to people that we are Christians and we are on about Jesus.

While we are doing this we can look and pray for opportunities to speak with people about who they think Jesus is. By approaching it this way we are allowing people to express their own views so that it is less confrontational, we are opening up a dialogue where people can feel safe and secure, and we are focusing the conversation upon the greatest servant of them all, Jesus Christ. Most people of this world do not know the true identity of Jesus and so it is impossible for them to understand God's message of salvation.

Starting conversations like these can seem daunting if it does not come naturally which is usually for most of us. So it is very helpful to have some practice beforehand. Split into small groups, come up with 3 scenarios e.g. coming across a neighbour in the supermarket, and then practice initiating a conversation using the Jesus is...phrase. Here are some practical tips:

- Allow people to express their own thoughts and ideas so that they feel you're genuinely listening to them. Asking people questions can help in this process.
- Allow the conversation to flow naturally but try and bring the conversation back to the identity of Jesus.
- Once they have told you who they think Jesus is try and get them to explain why they think that.
- Be confident during the conversation.
- Answer their questions where you feel able but be honest if you don't know the answer.
- Look for an opportunity to give the person a gospel tract or invite them to church or an evangelistic event.
- Be realistic recognising that some people will not want to talk about Jesus for reasons that you might not know about.



STUDY 7: OUR COMMISSION

What is the main game of Christianity?

Read Matthew 28:16-20

What has happened to Jesus up to this point in Matthew's gospel?

Where are the disciples going? Why?

What are the 2 different responses to Jesus when they first meet him?

If some doubted even though they saw the resurrected Jesus standing directly in front of them what does that tell us about how people will respond to Jesus today?

Who gave Jesus his authority and on what basis?

Does his authority extend over those who have different beliefs or come from different religions? What does that mean for those people?

What is the purpose of the 'therefore' in verse 19?

What is the main command of verse 19?

What does it mean to 'baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?' (Hint: It is used in a figurative sense akin to 1 Cor 10:1-2)

What are they to teach them?

Summarise the process of making disciples. What is the core activity? What are the different stages? When does it begin and when does it end?

What is the promise that Jesus gives his disciples at the end? How is it a comfort to them and to us?

During the 18th century it was argued that the Great Commission had been fulfilled by the first apostles and was not applicable to the church today. Do you agree or disagree?

If it is still applicable today then are we making and nurturing genuine disciples of Christ at St John's Mona Vale?

Are there things that are distracting us from this task? What are the things that are helping us? How can we improve together?

How does the Jesus is...campaign fit into this task?

Penn and Teller are two very famous illusionists as well as two very outspoken atheists. In an interview Penn relates an experience he had when he was evangelised by a Christian after one of his shows and this is one of the comments that he made:

"If you believe that there's a heaven and hell and people could be going to hell—or not getting eternal life or whatever—and you think that, well, it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward. . . . How much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?"

Do you agree or disagree?

