

Answering tough questions with Jesus

“With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand.”
Mark 4:33 (NIV)

This session guide outlines suggested elements you might use to help answer the key question below and achieve the aim of the training session. The time allocations can be adjusted according to the amount of time you have.

Key question: How can I be less afraid of and more prepared to answer tough questions?

Aim: To see that Jesus Himself often answered questions by telling stories. As we journey with people, we can show them more of Jesus in our answers to their questions.

Pre-video ice breaker/discussion starter (3 min)

What are some questions about Christianity that you’ve been asked, or are afraid of being asked?

We would recommend people split into pairs or triplets to discuss this and further questions. If you are doing more than one session over a period of time, it may be helpful for people to stick to the same pairs/groups so that they can build trust and support one another consistently.

We’d also recommend you either print the list of questions or display them on a screen if meeting in person. Put them into the chat feature before you head into breakout rooms if you’re meeting online.

Play video by Jeremy Marshall (approx. 15 min)

Download here: apassionforlife.org.uk/lc5-vid-download

Practical exercises and discussion questions (15 min)

Below is a list of questions to consider using. You will not have time for all of them, so select those that you think will be most helpful for people to internalise and apply what they’ve just heard. Maybe you can think of others.

1. How does the analogy that our conversations can easily get side-tracked from the main road of Jesus into unhelpful cul-de-sacs, help us in answering people’s questions?
2. Why do you think telling Bible stories might be a helpful way to answer people’s questions?
Remember, we often underestimate the interest unbelievers may have in these stories,

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especially if they've not heard them before and if they respect you and know Jesus means a lot to you.

3. Jeremy gave us a number of stories he uses in certain circumstances. What Bible stories or truths about Jesus might you use in response to the following? If you have time, practise your answers.
 - a) I'm afraid of death.
 - b) How do you know God exists?
 - c) I'm not good enough for God, I would only let him down.
 - d) I'm focussing on the here and now, I don't need God.
 - e) What difference does being a Christian make?
4. Pick a story about Jesus and practise sharing what it tells us of His character and how much He means to you. What questions might the story help answer?
5. Behind every question is a person on a spiritual journey. Brainstorm some follow-up questions that you might use after telling a Bible story to keep the conversation going. These questions might help you find out where the person is coming from and what barriers to trusting Jesus they may have.

Some ideas could include, "What are your thoughts on that story?" "Does anything about Jesus in that story surprise you?" "Why do you think Jesus would do that?" "Have you ever read a biography about Jesus? Would you be interested in taking a look with me over a coffee?"

Prayer time (12 min)

We would recommend leaving some time for people to pray in their pairs or groups. You may like to ask them to reflect and pray about what has encouraged or challenged them from this session. They may like to include these points:

- Thank God for His powerful Word that is alive and active (Hebrews 4:12)
- Pray for people you know to have a curiosity and desire to ask questions and find out more about Jesus.
- Ask God to help us and give us confidence to depend on Him and His Word in answering questions and speaking about Him to others.

Further Bible Reflection (10 min)

This is an additional Bible reflection to go deeper into the main theme. You may choose to use it as part of the training session. Alternatively, you could hand it out on a printout / email it around for reflection during the week, along with the "take home" questions.

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Read Luke 10:25-37

Context: In this passage Jesus is asked a number of questions which were designed to trip him up and to justify the viewpoint, wisdom and intellect of the lawyer who was addressing him.

Commentary: Jesus tells a story and in doing so not only teaches the hearer about being a loving neighbour but illustrates that the original question itself is at fault. It ought to have been, “How can I be a neighbour?” not, “Who is my neighbour?”.

Comment: What can we learn from Jesus’ model here? Can you think of other Bible passages that can be used to clarify or restate the true heart of the matter?

Take Home

You may like to print out / email around this section so that people can re-watch the video and reflect further.

Why not re-watch the video with a notebook open, praying that God will root these principles into your heart. Watch here: apassionforlife.org.uk/lc5-view

It’s natural to feel nervous when someone asks us questions about Christianity. It’s also ok to honestly say when you can’t think of a response off the top of your head. It’s great to write the question down and tell them you’ll find out for them.

One of the ways we can be more prepared is to get to know the gospel stories, read them regularly, reflect on them, pray in response to them and practise talking about them with others.

The training video is available for anyone to watch at apassionforlife.org.uk/lc5-view

More stories from everyday believers can be viewed and downloaded at apassionforlife.org.uk/lc5