



SESSION 6: IF GOD APPEARED TO ME, I'D BELIEVE IN HIM



Aim

To explore the belief that if God appeared to them, people would be more likely to believe in him and to consider whether God is interested in our mere belief in him.



Starter

Print and cut out the activity cards on page 4 of this resource.

Hand out one or more cards to each pupil and give them time to consider whether they do or do not believe in the person or item on the card, and why. Ask them to think about what evidence they could put forward for their belief. For example:

- ◆ Is it something they have experienced with one or more of their senses?
- ◆ Have they heard or read about it from someone they trust?
- ◆ Does it have a measurable effect on their lives?

There is a mixture of items on the cards – some are scientifically verifiable, some are historically verifiable, some are neither, some are personal preference. Some things pupils will have personal experience of, but others they will not – does this make them less believable?

Now invite each pupil to share their thoughts in turn. Allow others to agree or disagree, or (if a quiet group) ask them to vote with their fingers on a scale of 1 finger = strongly disagree to 5 fingers = strongly agree.

If you have time, you may wish to continue the discussion. Today when expressing belief in things, we tend to be happiest with those which are scientifically verifiable. Where does that leave something like love or a personal preference for cheese?



Video

Watch the video [If God Appeared To Me, I'd Believe in Him](#) (Running time 4:24)



Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



Exploring the Bible

Read Mark 5:1-10

In the video, Andy Bannister said that God was not interested in people just believing in him. One of his reasons was that even evil spirits believe in Jesus, but that does not mean they have a good relationship with him.

Discuss

In what ways does this passage in Mark's biography affirm Andy's comments?

1. *The evil spirits do believe in Jesus since they address him as 'Son of the Most High God' (v.7). They believe he is God and has God's power as they beg him not to send them out (v.10).*
2. *The evil spirits do not have a good relationship with Jesus. They have inhabited this man and caused him to harm himself and be separated from others. We know from our encounters with Jesus that he cares for people and seeks to bring them together, not apart, so the evil spirits stand completely opposed to Jesus. They also beg Jesus not to torture them, indicating Jesus has power over them and he will not be exercising it for their benefit.*

If you asked someone to believe in you, what might you mean by that?

1. *Believing in what you say (that you'll keep your word)*
2. *Believing in your ability (e.g. believe that I can accomplish something)*
3. *Believing in your character (that you are the sort of person who can be trusted to do something)*

If the group need help with this question change it to what a movie or book character might mean if they ask someone to believe in them.

If God is not interested in people merely believing in him, what is he interested in?

Read Mark 8:34-38

Discuss

In the video, Andy Bannister said God does not merely want belief, he wants full surrender. What language in this passage from Mark suggests this is true?

1. *Deny themselves (v.34)*
2. *Take up their cross (v.34)*
3. *Loses their life for me and for the gospel (v.36)*

The idea of surrendering fully to another person is something we probably find hard. We discussed earlier what it might mean to believe in another person – it might mean believing in their words, actions and character, and that they are consistent with who they say they are.

In the time we have spent in Mark's biography, what have you learned about Jesus from his words and actions?

1. *His actions: Cares for others and acts for their good e.g. healing of the man with the shrivelled hand; care for the demon-possessed man*
2. *His words: he stands up against injustice e.g. harsh words for the Pharisees who oppose the healing of the man in Mark 3*

Does any of this make a difference to how you might feel about submitting to Jesus?



Reflection

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:

- ◆ Would you be more likely to believe in God if he appeared in front of you? Why do you think this is?
- ◆ There is far more historical evidence for the person and miracles of Jesus than Julius Caesar. Why do you think people find it easier to believe in Julius Caesar?
- ◆ Would you like to believe in Jesus? Why or why not?



Further resources

The Case for Christ by Lee Strobel is a book with evidence of the historical person of Jesus and the resurrection. There is also a movie version.



Print-and-Cut Activity Cards

GRAVITY	LOVE	RAIN
CHICKENPOX	EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR ME	$A_2 + B_2 = C_2$
WATER TURNS TO STEAM AT 100°C	BIPOLAR DISORDER	THERE IS NO OXYGEN IN SPACE
RACISM	BUDDHA	JULIUS CAESAR
POLIO	A LOVE OF CHEESE	RELATIONAL CHEMISTRY BETWEEN PEOPLE