

BRAVE

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCE

PREPARED FOR SYG 2017

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY RESOURCE

Welcome to SYG 2017, the year of BRAVE.

This Bible study resource is designed to be used by your group each evening of SYG, usually after the Evening Program session. It contains Bible stories, discussion questions, and reflection prompts to help open the Bible and unpack the BRAVE theme in your group.

We recommend breaking into small groups of around 6 after each Evening Program session and opening the Bible together. The material in these studies can serve as a guide for Bible passages to explore, questions to ask, and reflections on the night's themes.

We have tried hard to make these studies as open and broad as possible, but we don't know your young people and their situations. You, as a leader, are equipped with knowledge of your young people, and so you can make decisions about the material in these studies. If a question doesn't seem relevant, don't use it. If there's a topic that isn't brought up by the questions, bring it up. If the pre-written prayer feels trite and simplistic, pray your own prayer.

These studies are not a perfect, universally applicable—or even universally useful—resource; they are a skeleton that needs you, as a leader, to give them flesh and life and animation in a small group of young people that you are in ongoing relationship with.

The lists of questions presented for discussion should not be treated as a concrete road map for dialogue. They are intended as conversation starters, to begin a conversation that meanders through topics as guided by the young people in your small group. Leaders should act as a conversation partner, steering conversation only mildly as attentions wane. If you only use three of the pre-written questions in the course of discussion, that's

okay. If you use all of them, that's okay too.

These studies are divided into a few core sections.

READ sections contain a short introduction to the key themes of the night's study, informed by the content of the Evening Program session, and a couple of Bible stories. You may choose to read this introduction to your small group, or summarise it in your own words, or launch straight into the Bible stories.

When reading the Bible stories, we recommend reading the stories out loud, and utilising a variety of translations where you can.

DISCUSS sections contain questions based on the Bible stories, drawing out the key themes of the Evening Program sessions. These questions are intended to serve as a guide, not a path, but are arranged beginning with 'remembering' conversation starters that progress into 'reflecting' personal questions.

REFLECT sections summarise a personal theme, and present a pre-written prayer around the night's topics. You may choose to read the reflection to your small group, summarise it in your own words, or ask small group members to provide their own reflections. The same goes for the prayer. If appropriate, encourage each member of the small group to pray to close the evening.

And remember, you can download a digital copy of this study at stateyouthgames.com/vic.

We pray that God uses these studies to create some rich conversations among your young people and leaders.

God bless. \\\

SETTING OFF

STUDY ONE \ FRIDAY

READ

Last year at SYG we explored the topic of HOPE in a world that needs it. This year the theme is BRAVE, and we are celebrating the big and small steps that take courage in transforming ourselves, our communities, and the world around us. In the journey of faith, there comes a call to set off from the comfortable and the known into something massive, risky, and new. That takes bravery.

In tonight's stories, Jesus calls ordinary people out of their everyday lives into something new.

Read **John 1:35-51** and **Matthew 9:9-13** together.

DISCUSS

- \ What stands out to you in the stories we have read?
- \ \ What moment is most important to you?
- \ \ Did somebody say something that stuck with you?
- \ What does Andrew's actions reveal about him, his brother Simon, and Andrew's faith?
- \ Why do you think Jesus called Matthew the tax collector?
- \ What does it mean to follow Jesus?
- \ Do you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus?
- \ \ If you are a disciple, who called you to follow? Was it a family member (like Andrew called Simon)? Was it a friend (like Phillip called Nathanael)? Did you feel called by Jesus directly (as Matthew was called)? Was it a mentor or leader who pointed Jesus out to you (as John did for Andrew and Phillip)? Or was it someone else, or a combination of those?
- \ \ If you are not a disciple, what would a call to follow look like for you?
- \ What do the disciples achieve when they leave their lives behind to follow Jesus?
- \ What is the relationship between discipleship and sacrifice?
- \ Have you ever had to give something up in order to do something else? How did you make the decision to give that thing up? What made you sure it was the right thing to do (if you were sure)?
- \ \ Was it hard to make that choice?
- \ What is something in your life that Jesus may ask you to walk away from to follow him?
- \ What is something that Jesus offers through following him?

REFLECT

Sometimes we have to say 'no' to one thing in our lives, so that we can say 'yes' to something else, something better. Pray together as a group around what better things God is calling you into.

You may choose to pray this prayer together:

Dear God

We thank you for the stories we have heard tonight, and the things that have been shared in discussion. We pray that you will continue to speak to us through your stories in the Bible, and through our friends here at SYG.

Please continue to call us into a deeper journey with you, and guide us to where you need us to be. Be with us when we have to make hard choices, and show us the things that are most important.

Help us be brave in the face of risk and hardship, and fill us with joy to be walking alongside you. Your Holy Spirit guides and sustains us when the going gets rough.

In Jesus' name,

*Amen. *

BRAVE OUT

STUDY TWO \ SATURDAY

READ

Jesus has a radical message for the world that will change everything; the way we buy and sell things, the way we work, the way we speak, the way we interact with other people, and the way we see ourselves. Wherever our ways of doing things hurt people, or ignore people's inherent worth as deeply loved creations of the living God, Jesus seeks to upend those systems and replace them with something better.

Tonight's stories explore Jesus' vision for the world, and how the world responded.

Read **Luke 4:16-30** and **Matthew 5:1-12** together.

DISCUSS

- \ What stands out to you from these stories?
- \ Based on what you hear in these stories, describe Jesus' vision for the world.
- \ Who is included in this radical vision for the world?
 - \ \ Why did Jesus include the stories of Elijah and Elisha meeting with a widow in Zarephath, and a man from Syria?
- \ How did people respond to Jesus' Good News message?
 - \ \ Why did the people of Nazareth try to kill Jesus?
- \ Do we ever exclude people from being part of the Good News message of God?
- \ How can we begin to invite more people into the Good News story?

- \ What does it look like to be "poor in spirit"?
- \ What does it mean to "mourn"?
- \ What does it mean to be "meek"?
- \ What does it look like to "hunger and thirst for righteousness"?
- \ What does it mean to be "merciful"?
- \ What does it look like to be "pure in heart"?
- \ What does it mean to be a "peacemaker"?
- \ What does it look like to be "persecuted for righteousness' sake"?
- \ Are these easy things to be and do?
- \ How can we make Jesus' vision for the world a reality?

READ

Read **John 18 - 19:30** together.

DISCUSS

- \ Why was Jesus arrested?
- \ Does the process of Jesus arrest, trial, and execution seem fair?
- \ What stands out to you from this story?
- \ How does Jesus' death inform the Christian vision of a Good News world?
- \ How to the events of this story shape our world?

REFLECT

If we believe that we are all here on earth to assist in the reconciliation of God's creation back to right relationship with him, that's a big mission! Often this can feel overwhelming if we don't work together and create safe communities where people are genuinely loved. Pray together about Jesus' vision for the world, and how we can partner with him to make it a reality.

You may choose to pray this prayer together:

Dear God

We thank you for what has been shared tonight, and the powerful stories of in the Bible. We thank you for sending your son Jesus to Earth, to show us how you want us to live, and giving us your Holy Spirit to guide us.

Be with us as we wrestle with how our actions, and our systems, impact the world and other people. Help us have an eye for how we affect other people, and to right the wrongs that we are unconsciously a part of. Help us live up to the vision of the world that Jesus expresses in his teaching.

Help us stand with courage in the face of a broken world, and love like Jesus does.

In Jesus' name,

*Amen. *

BRAVE IN

STUDY THREE \ SUNDAY

READ

Jesus offers radical transformation of our internal and spiritual selves in line with his radical vision for our world; we are to be people of shalom (peace, wholeness) in close relationship with our creator, and to be a part of a Kingdom led by God.

Tonight's stories explore moments of transformation, revelation, and realisation for a variety of people.

Read **Matthew 14:22-33** together.

DISCUSS

- \ What stood out to you in this story?
- \ \ Did somebody say something that stuck with you?
- \ What made Peter step out of the boat?
- \ How did this experience change Peter's understanding of Jesus?
- \ How do you think Peter's understanding of himself changed after this moment?
- \ Have you ever felt helpless and in danger, like Peter and the disciples were?
- \ \ What pulled you through that time?
- \ How does Jesus affect our lives today?
- \ What does the idea of having a 'relationship' with Jesus mean to you?
- \ Where do you usually meet Jesus? Is it in reading the Bible, in prayer, or out in nature? Do you tend

to meet him by yourself, or when there are people around you, praying or doing things together?

- \ \ How do the places and times we encounter Jesus affect how we see him?

READ

Read **John 20:1-18** and **Luke 24:13-32** together.

DISCUSS

- \ What stood out to you in these stories?
- \ How would it have felt for the disciples to encounter Jesus in the garden and on the road?
- \ What does it mean for the world that Jesus came back to life?
- \ How did the disciples recognise Jesus in each of the stories?
- \ How can we cultivate a familiarity with Jesus that helps us see him for who he is, even when we don't immediately recognise him?
- \ How can we keep focused on God when our world is very self-focussed?
- \ Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your inner self doesn't match your behaviours?
- \ \ How can we work to make sure our inner selves and our outer selves (behaviours) are ones we are happy with?
- \ What does the Kingdom Jesus talks about look like in your school, home, work, church, and family?

REFLECT

Our internal life is something God is passionate about transforming and reconciling back to him, just as he is with the rest of creation. Where we spend our time and energy can be a big indicator of what our internal self values and believes in. Pray together for courage to allow God to work in our hearts, minds, and souls, aligning us to his Kingdom vision.

You may choose to pray this prayer together:

Dear God

We thank you that you are always at work in our hearts, minds, and souls through the time we share together, the time we spend exploring your stories, and the time we spend in prayer with you.

We know that sometimes our inner selves are not aligned with your Kingdom, and we experience selfishness, meanness, and behave in ways that are not part of your Kingdom vision for the world. We ask for your forgiveness, and we want to work with you to grow in the vision you set out for us.

Through the power of your Holy Spirit, we ask you to work in us, strengthen us, and call us deeper into relationship with you. We want to be a part of your Kingdom, and return to the close relationship with you that you created us for.

In Jesus' name,

*Amen. *

THERE AND BACK AGAIN

STUDY FOUR \ AFTER SYG

READ

As the journey in our stories concludes, people return to where they started, but they are forever changed. How can they reclaim the lives they left, if they even can, and what does a transformed life look like when the person returns home?

Tonight's stories feature Jesus' call on his disciples' lives, and what happens *after* the amazing revelatory experience.

Read **Matthew 5:13-16** and **John 21:1-19** together.

DISCUSS

- \ What stands out to you from these stories?
- \ What does it mean for us to be 'salt' in the world?
- \ What does it look like for us to be a 'light'?
- \ How does Jesus' Good News message change the way we live?
- \ Why do you think Peter wanted to go fishing that day?
- \ What was the call Jesus gave to Peter, the task he set him?
- \ Have you heard God speaking to you over the SYG weekend? This might be through a friend or leader, through Sam Hearn the guest speaker, or through other means.

// What is God challenging you in?

// What is God encouraging you in?

\ What do you think God might be calling you into?

REFLECT

The process of cultivating a life of faith starts with a decision. But this decision is made over again, daily recommitting to the Kingdom vision Jesus taught about. It is a daily commitment, a daily choice to follow God's call. The world needs brave people to step into dark places and bring light. Pray together for God to guide and support you as you return to normal life.

You may choose to pray this prayer together.

Dear God

Thank you for speaking to us over the SYG weekend. We pray that you continue to speak to us, and help us listen to your voice through the stories we explore, our friends, and leaders.

Please cement your Kingdom vision in our minds, hearts, and souls, and guide us through your Holy Spirit in ways that we can be 'salt' and 'light' in our communities.

We pray for your transformation in our lives, and in our communities.

Help us walk with courage in your Good News message. Be with us as we follow your call into new and better things.

In Jesus' name,

Amen. //

