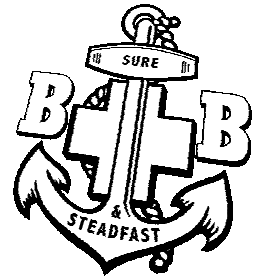


The Boys' Brigade – Glasgow Battalion



Christian Faith Programme Syllabus A

Under Brigade Regulations, the responsibility for Christian Faith within the Company rests with the parent Church to which the Company belongs. This also helps develop good working relationships with local Churches. Your minister, who is an officer in the Company, may wish to take an active role in supervision and assessment or this may be delegated to an elder, officer or other suitable person in the Church.

This syllabus provides a resource under Bible Knowledge in the Community Area of the Company Section Discover Programme.

There are four prepared syllabi : -

- A. Jesus – Teacher and Healer
- B. God's Young Church
- C. Preparing the Way – God's Men
- D. Key Events in the Life of Jesus

The following syllabus is for "*Jesus – Teacher and Healer*". Notes to support this are attached, as are specimen examination papers at three levels, however, the final programme followed and methods of assessment should be agreed by the individual company and their parent church, according to local needs.

Where new programmes, assessment methods or resources are developed locally, it would be helpful if these could be shared with the Battalion Office so that local successes can be shared more widely with other companies in the Battalion and we can expand our resources for everyone in the years to come.

As with all Brigade awards, assessment should take account of individual Boy's circumstances and appropriate alternative means of assessment may be advisable.

Christian Faith Programme – Jesus Teacher & Healer

This year's theme focuses attention on two of the most significant aspects of Jesus' life and work. Both features have a prominent place in all four Gospels and make a major contribution to the picture of Jesus the writers are concerned to present. Both in his teachings and in his healings Jesus is represented as exercising an authority and a power that mark him out as someone special and substantiate his unique status and role as the long awaited Messiah. Consequently the stories Jesus tells and the stories that are told about him are not only valuable in themselves but important for the light they have to shed on who Jesus was. The passages to be studied are all drawn from Luke's portrait of Jesus and give little more than a flavour of what were clearly highly rated and well-remembered episodes in a full and challenging life.

The stories selected for study are listed below together with the relevant passages from the Bible.

Candidates for the Level 1 Award are not required to study those passages marked with an asterisk (*). Candidates taking the examinations for Levels 2 and 3 will be expected to answer questions on all 12 passages listed.

It is recommended that the passages are studied in the Good News Bible or the New International Version or some other suitable modern translation.

The following are the passages and topics selected for study:

1	Luke 8:	4 – 15	The Sower and the Seed
2	Luke 10:	25 – 37	Who is my neighbour
* 3	Luke 14:	12 – 24	A missed opportunity
4	Luke 15:	1 – 32	Lost and found
* 5	Luke 19:	11 – 27	Making the most of one's opportunities
6	Luke 6:	46 – 49	Wise and Foolish builders
7	Luke 5:	17 – 26	Healing a paralysed man
* 8	Luke 7:	1 – 10	Healing a centurion's servant
* 9	Luke 8:	40 – 42 49 – 56	Healing Jairus' daughter
10	Luke 17:	11 – 19	Healing ten lepers
11	Luke 18:	25 – 43	Healing a blind man
12	Luke 19:	1 - 10	Healing Zacchaeus

In 1 – 6 attention is focussed on the teaching aspect of Jesus' activities and in 7 – 12 it is the healing aspect that is highlighted, although the distinction is in some respects arbitrary as both kinds of stories are used by Luke to teach about Jesus. The passages in each section are listed in the order in which they appear in the Gospel according to Luke (with the exception of 6) but it is not necessary to introduce them in that order.

1 LUKE 8: 4–15 - THE SOWER AND THE SEED

Like all of Jesus' parables this story is rooted in the experience of his hearers. The scene he depicts was a familiar occurrence in a rural society where farmers lacked the sophisticated equipment and expertise which exist today. The seed was sown "broadcast" and frequently landed on unpromising soil. But, despite the inevitable wastage, sufficient seed fell on good productive ground to ensure a worthwhile harvest and justify all the effort involved. That may well have been the original point of their story and Jesus' answer to those who were critical of his apparent lack of success. However the interpretation that is given focuses attention on the different responses Jesus' followers can anticipate when they go out and tell others about him. The variety of responses identified will be familiar to any Christian preacher or BB Officer.

GRADE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Is the situation Jesus depicts still an accurate description of what happens today? How far is Jesus' optimism justified in the light of 2,000 years of Christian history?

2 LUKE 10: 25–37 - WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

Much of Jesus' teaching was directed against false assumptions. This well known story was Jesus' response to a man who wanted him to define who his neighbour was. But behind the question there was the unspoken assumption that not everyone is entitled to be regarded or treated as a neighbour. There must be those, it is assumed, who can have no legitimate claim upon our love or consideration. But in the story Jesus set out to challenge that assumption. Relationships between Jews and Samaritans were notoriously bad. No self-respecting Jew would have felt any obligation to be neighbourly to a Samaritan. He would have drawn the line at that and felt entirely justified in doing so. But it is a Samaritan of all people who is commended in the story because he completely ignored these conventional, man-made distinctions and responded positively to the man and his needs. The clear lesson is that the obligation to respond to human need knows no bounds. It is unacceptable to impose those artificial limits on the range of our concern. The fact that the victim was a Jew and would have been unlikely to have been helpful had the roles been reversed; the fact that he had taken unnecessary risks by travelling down that particular road on his own; all were of no account. The man's need and how that need could be met were the only factors worthy of consideration in the circumstances.

GRADE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Are there people today who are denied the help they need because of who or what they are? If so, what can be done to remedy the situation?

3 LUKE 14: 12–24 - THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The story is a challenge to Jesus' contemporaries. As Jews they had been living for that day when the Messiah, their long awaited deliverer would come. They believed that when that happened God would be more directly involved in their affairs and would help to sort out their problems for them both as individuals and as a people. When they tried to express what they believed about these good times which they believed lay ahead, they sometimes described them as a feast or a banquet – a particularly happy or joyful celebration in which

they are expected to share. In this story Jesus seems to be suggesting that if they are not careful they are in danger of missing the boat. The good times they had been anticipating had arrived. He was the long promised Messiah they had been waiting for. But if they failed to respond as they should, it would be left to others (presumably Gentiles) to enjoy the party.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

What reasons do people give today for not following Jesus? How would you help them to reassess their priorities?

4 LUKE 15: 1–32 - LOST AND FOUND

This passage contains three stories which develop a common theme. The context makes it clear that Jesus was responding to those who were criticising him for associating with people they assumed God had no time for – the people who, for whatever reason, had distanced themselves from God. Why was Jesus wasting his time on people who had broken every rule in the book and could not reasonably expect to have a place in God's Kingdom? Each story in its own way challenges that assumption and asserts God's unwavering concern for those who are 'Lost'. The shepherd, the woman and the waiting father have one thing in common. They are bent on recovering what is lost and are overjoyed when their search or their waiting proves successful. It is no accident Jesus welcomed sinners and ate with them. It was all part of the recovery operation he had been sent to undertake.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Are we too ready to write people off? In what ways does the Church help or hinder Jesus in his efforts to recover the 'lost'?

5 LUKE 19: 11–27 - MAKING THE MOST OF ONE'S OPPORTUNITIES

This story is similar to the story of the talents in the Gospel according to Matthew. But whereas each person in Matthew's story was entrusted with a different number of talents, each of the people in this story each receives the same amount. It is clear however, that in both stories the amount given is irrelevant. The significant thing is what the individuals do with the pound in their pocket. Two of them use it to advantage but it is worth nothing that the man who comes back with five or more is commended as warmly as the man who appears with ten. Only the man who did nothing with what he was given is criticised for his failure and for the poor opinion he had of his master He was taking no chances.

Whatever the original circumstances of the story it has long been regarded as a challenging reminder of the need to make the most of our God-given opportunities.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Was the master justified in treating his third servant as he did?

6 LUKE 6: 46–49 - WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

The story comes at the end of that collection of Jesus' teaching which is described as his 'Sermon on the Plain'. The fuller version appears in Matthew's Gospel where it is commonly referred to as the 'Sermon on the Mount'. The title in each case reflects the setting in which the teaching was given.

The story of the two builders provides a fitting conclusion to both versions and reflects the amazing confidence Jesus had in the quality and importance of his leadership and teaching. His teaching, he claimed offers mankind the only secure foundation upon which to build its future. No other foundation will stand the test of time. The contrasting fate of the two buildings is presented in a picture of stark simplicity which helps to put Jesus' teaching into its proper perspective. It is of fundamental importance and not cosmetic in its impact upon human life and society.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Can Jesus' claim be taken seriously in the 21st Century?

7 LUKE 5: 17–26 - HEALING A PARALYSED MAN

This particular story is one of a series related by Luke in which Jesus is shown to be in conflict with scribes and Pharisees – the men who were to be his main opponents throughout his public ministry. They were the self-appointed upholders of true religion and regularly opposed Jesus in the belief that they were thereby defending the faith and spiritual purity of the nation.

The story itself is full of human interest and reflects great credit not only on the compassion of Jesus but on the perseverance and ingenuity of the man's friends and the faith that encouraged them to do what they did. It should be noted however that the story's inclusion has more to do with the way Jesus dealt with the man than with the actual healing itself. What angered Jesus' critics was not that he healed the man but that to do so he assumed the role of God himself. What right had he to forgive a man his sins? It is clear that this was not Jesus' method in other situations and in a well-known episode related by John (John 9: 1-3) he dismissed the disciples' attempts to establish the cause of a blind man's disability. The fact that he responded as he did on this occasion suggests that this man's condition was due to a particular problem which had to be dealt with in that way if his paralysis was to be cured. Therefore when dealing with this story it is important not to convey the misleading impression that Jesus attributed all illness to the sinfulness of the individual concerned. The whole vent clearly raises important questions about Jesus' identity and is a source of amazement to all who witness it.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Is it still important today to introduce our friends of Jesus? Do other people sometimes make it difficult for us to do so?

8 LUKE 7: 1–10 - HEALING A CENTURION'S SERVANT.

This too is a story which highlights the important part played by faith in Jesus' work of healing. As in the previous story it is not the faith of the person in need that is commended but the faith of the person who was prepared to bring that need to Jesus' attention. The fact that, on this occasion, the person concerned was a Roman soldier makes it all the more significant. It suggests that Jesus was already known and respected outside the confines of his own community and that human suffering and its remedy were more important to him than the anti-Roman prejudices of many of his contemporaries. The very suggestion that the faith of a Roman soldier could be superior to anything Jesus had found anywhere else in Israel (a country which prided itself in the quality of its faith) must have raised a few hackles and done little to endear him to the religious leaders of his people.

The most striking feature of the story is the way the Centurion – a man who was accustomed to wielding authority – recognised and responded to the authority of Jesus. But Jesus' response was no less remarkable. Deeply moved by the obvious humility, concern and faith of the Roman soldier Jesus more than fulfilled the amazing confidence he had in him.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Does faith still affect the influence Jesus can have upon our lives?

9 LUKE 8: 40–42, 49–56 - HEALING JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Jairus, like the Centurion, was an unlikely person to seek Jesus' help. As a leading figure in the synagogue he was part of the Jewish religious establishment and, as such, closely associated with those who were hostile to Jesus and had deliberately distanced themselves from him. That he was willing to turn to Jesus in his hour of need is a tribute both to the openness of the man and to Jesus' reputation in the community.

The story, as related by Luke, underlines the unique nature of the power that was exercised by Jesus. Even Jairus is depicted as underestimating its capacity. Once his daughter was dead Jairus was convinced that even Jesus could do nothing to retrieve the situation, but the impossible happened. The power to Jesus proved to be superior even to the power of death. To the amazement of everyone the girl was restored to life. It was as if she had only been asleep.

Christians still think and speak of death in these terms. It is a sleep from which they confidently expect they will awake.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How can this story help Christians come to terms with death?

10 LUKE 17: 11–19 - HEALING TEN LEPERS

In the ancient world leprosy was a dreaded disease. To be cured of leprosy was almost as impossible as to be raised from the dead. The fact that Jesus is represented as doing both underlines the special nature of the powers he possessed. This is one of several occasions on which Jesus responded positively to people suffering from leprosy. In Leviticus 13 and 14 there are detailed instructions about what action to take when a person suspects he had contracted the disease. Apart from the physically crippling effects of the disease itself, those

suffering from it were excluded from the everyday life of the community. They were separated from home and family and prevented from participating in the worship of temple or synagogue. They were described as “unclean”. Only if the priest was satisfied that every trace of the disease had been removed were they free to resume a normal existence. That is why Jesus told the lepers to show themselves to the priest. He was the person who had to supply the official confirmation that their cure was complete.

In the story it is the lepers themselves who have the faith to do what they are told. But only one of the ten had the courtesy to come back and express his appreciation for what had happened. What is even more surprising is that he was a Samaritan. Not for the first time in Luke’s Gospel it is a non-Jew who is singled out for special commendation.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

By healing the lepers Jesus showed that he cared for people the community had rejected. How can the followers of Jesus show their concern for people like that today?

11 LUKE 18: 35–43 - HEALING A BLIND MAN

The stories studied in 7, 8 and 9 all illustrate the important part played by other people in bringing someone to Jesus. But for the persistence of the four friends, the Centurion and Jairus, it seems highly improbable that the paralysed man, the servant or Jairus’ daughter would ever have benefited from Jesus’ help. In that respect the lepers were different (10).

They acted on their own initiative and made contact with Jesus without help from anyone else. In this story the blind man reached Jesus in spite of the determined efforts of other people to stop him, and it is a tribute to his perseverance that he succeeded in doing so.

This is one of several stories in which Jesus is depicted as restoring sight to the blind. It is ironic that in this particular incident the man who is physically blind apparently possessed greater spiritual insight than those whose physical eyesight was good. To them Jesus was, quite simply, Jesus of Nazareth. But the blind man addressed him by his full Messianic title. He is Son of David. It may well have been that conviction that encouraged the man to persist as he did. Recognising who Jesus was, was not a matter of indifference. It had an important bearing on how the man responded to him. It is worth noting that Jesus did not presume to identify what the man wanted. It was only when the man himself did so that Jesus responded as he did. Once again faith – in this instance the man’s own faith – is identified as a crucial factor in the cure.

The story is important for itself but it also helps to substantiate the claim that Jesus was the Messiah. In the light of such passages as Isaiah 35: verse 5 it was confidently anticipated that when the Messiah came the eyes of the blind would be opened. It is also a story that provides a fitting introduction to the eye-opening events that are about to unfold as Luke’s story moves to its climax in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

For practical purposes, does it matter who Jesus was?

12 LUKE 19: 1–10 - THE HEALING OF ZACCHAEUS

The last five stories have all focussed attention on the compassion of Jesus as it was reflected in his dealings with people who were suffering from some form of physical disability or illness. The story of Zacchaeus shows how Jesus brought healing to a man who was morally and spiritually sick.

The fact that Zacchaeus made the effort to seek out Jesus as he did suggests that, like the blind man, he was aware of his need. Like the blind man, he got no encouragement or help from the people. In his case it is not surprising considering the way he had treated them. But, like the blind man, he was not to be diverted and the eventual outcome must have exceeded his wildest expectations.

The hostility of the crowd was no less a test of Jesus' resolve. If he was to give Zacchaeus the help he needed he had to get alongside him. To do that he had to be prepared to spend the night under his roof. The people disapproved. To associate him with someone in Zacchaeus' position would render him "unclean". The man's need was more important to Jesus than his own reputation. It was a risk he had to take. It was people like that he had come to help. The 'lost' were his principal concern. The meeting turned out to be an unqualified success. Zacchaeus emerged a reformed character, genuinely sorry for what he had done and actively seeking ways of redressing the hurt and the damage he had caused. A broken life had been effectively healed.

STAGE 3: QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How can the BB and the Church help Boys have a more healthy and satisfying lifestyle today?