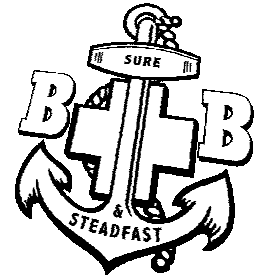


The Boys' Brigade – Glasgow Battalion



Christian Faith Programme Syllabus D

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 *"Key Events in the Life of Jesus"*. 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 – **Key Events in the Life of Jesus**

It is self-evident that Jesus' life and teaching are central to Christianity. It is, therefore, appropriate that a Christian Education course should give due prominence in its programme to a study of Jesus. This year's syllabus is designed to focus attention on some of the key events in his life from his birth to his resurrection, while next year the emphasis will be on his work as a teacher and healer. All but two of the passages to be studied are taken from the Gospel according to Mark, but we are indebted to Luke for stories of Jesus' birth and boyhood visit to the Temple. The key events selected for study are listed below, together with the relevant passages from the Bible.

The level 1 assessment does not include those passages marked with an asterisk (*). Assessment at the other two levels include all 12 passages listed. Additional notes and suggested questions for discussion are provided to assist those conducting the Course.

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

1	Luke	2: 1 - 20	Jesus is born
2	Luke	2: 39 - 52	Jesus in the Temple
3	Mark	1: 1 - 13	Jesus is baptised and tempted
4	Mark	1: 14 - 20	Jesus calls His first disciples
5 *	Mark	2: 23 – 3: 6	Jesus faces opposition
6	Mark	8: 27 - 38	Jesus is identified
7 *	Mark	9: 2 - 8	Jesus is transfigured
8	Mark	11: 1 - 11	Jesus enters Jerusalem
9 *	Mark	11: 15 – 19	Jesus visits the Temple
10 *	Mark	14: 11 - 31	Jesus eats with His friends
11	Mark	15: 21 - 41	Jesus is crucified
12	Mark	16: 1 - 8	Jesus is raised from the dead

1 LUKE 2: 1 – 20 JESUS IS BORN

It is likely that most Boys will already be familiar with some details of the story of Jesus' birth. However, their version will probably be a mixture of the two stories contained in Matthew and Luke respectively, and care should be taken to focus their attention on what is related in Luke. Both writers locate Jesus' birth in Bethlehem but it is Luke, for example, who makes specific reference to Bethlehem's connection with David.

It is also Luke who dates Jesus' birth by reference to Roman officials and identifies a census as the reason for Mary and Joseph's presence in Bethlehem at that particular time. According to Luke, it is shepherds who receive the first intimation of Jesus' birth and make the journey to Bethlehem to see the child. These men, who were despised and rejected by the religious leaders of their day, are represented as playing a leading and unlikely role in the entire episode.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Why do Christians consider it important to celebrate Christmas Day?

2 LUKE 2: 39 – 52 JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Apart from this story, there is no reference in the Gospels to Jesus' boyhood and to what was happening during the 30 years which, according to Luke (3: 23), elapsed between Jesus' birth and the beginning of his public ministry. The total absence of any reliable information has inevitably led to widespread speculation, but this incident related by Luke is very different in character and intention from the often bizarre tales that found their way into some other writings of the time.

According to this story, Jesus and his family had come to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, the greatest and most widely observed of all Jewish festivals. In these days, it could only be celebrated in Jerusalem and many families made their way to the city to share in the annual festivities. The specific reference to Jesus' age is probably an indication that this particular visit had been rather special for him. He had become a man in the eyes of the community, and was now regarded as personally responsible for performing the many religious duties the Jewish law required.

The story itself depicts Jesus as displaying all the natural curiosity of a 12 year old who was determined to make the most of his newly acquired status and was completely at home in the Temple and with the people who frequented it. However, there can be little doubt that Luke's main interest in the story was in Jesus' reply to his mother, 'Did you not know that I was bound to be in my Father's house?' (NEB)

It was an important marker, pointing the way to future developments and to that later occasion when he was to return to 'his Father's house' (Mark 11: 15 - 19)

He returned to Nazareth and 'continued' to be under their (Mary and Joseph's) authority. Even he must continue to honour his father and mother, as the law required, but already he was aware that he was subject to an even higher authority, viz. God.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Jesus' visit to the Temple made an important contribution to his personal development. How has the Boys' association with The BB/Church influenced their outlook on life?

3 MARK 1: 1 – 13 JESUS IS BAPTISED AND TEMPTED

New beginnings are commonly accompanied by some significant event which helps to mark the occasion. Jesus' baptism clearly falls within that category.

It marked the break he was making with the comparative obscurity of his former life in Nazareth and the beginning of his public ministry. The experience, as it is described in the story, confirmed his belief that his commission was from God, and that he would have the help of God's Spirit to fulfil it. What followed was a period of soul-searching and testing as Jesus came to terms with the new powers and responsibilities entrusted to him. Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark gives no indication of the nature of the temptations that confronted Jesus.

Mark is content to focus attention on the loneliness of the experience, the spiritual support he received and the fact that he emerged from the ordeal unscathed.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How were Jesus' baptism and temptation an important preparation for the tasks that lay ahead of him? Is it important for Christians to know that Jesus was tempted?

4 MARK 1: 14 – 20 JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

For generations the Jewish people had been longing for the coming of the Kingdom of God. It was to be a very special time, when order would be restored and God would be seen to be in control once more. What precisely that meant in practical terms was less certain but, in general, it came to be thought of as the 'Heaven upon Earth' that everyone was waiting for. Jesus claimed that the dream had now become a reality.

God's long-awaited rule had begun - even although the reality might seem very different from what the majority imagined it might be.

In the light of his momentous claim Jesus' choice of disciples was, to say the least of it, surprising. They were not the kind of people a prospective religious leader might have been expected to gather round him, and it could have done little to enhance his credibility with the religious establishment of his day. That Jesus chose the men he did is a clear indication that he was determined to make a fresh start, and the readiness of their response to his invitation to follow him is an indication of his strength of personality. The ordinary people, who were later to respond so positively to Jesus, were well represented amongst his closest friends and supporters from the beginning.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

How does the story of Jesus' call of his first disciples help us to understand what may be involved in following Jesus today?

5 MARK 2: 23 - 3:6

JESUS FACES OPPOSITION

Mark leaves his readers in no doubt that the hostility which ultimately boiled up and sent Jesus to the cross, was no last minute change of heart. From first to last, Jesus had his critics. One of the areas in which he gave greatest offence was in his apparent disregard for the rules governing the Sabbath and its observance. The Law stated that the Sabbath Day should be kept holy, i.e. separate or different from the other six days in the week. That meant, in particular, that no work of any kind should be done on that day, and the experts in the Law went to great lengths to spell out in the greatest possible detail what could and could not be done. Both stories recorded by Mark relate incidents in which Jesus is represented as ignoring the strict interpretation/application of the Law.

In both cases, Jesus suggests that the response to human need is more important than keeping the Law for its own sake. More startling still, he sets himself above the Law, claiming that even the Sabbath, the most highly cherished of all Jewish institutions, was subject to his authority. It was an amazing claim to make. Little wonder that the Pharisees, who were the great experts in the defence and interpretation of the Law, were determined that the time had come to get rid of him.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

By opposing Jesus as they did, many people, like the Pharisees, made life difficult for him. What difficulties do people face in trying to follow Jesus today?

6 MARK 8: 27 – 38

JESUS IS IDENTIFIED

Mark, like the writers of the other Gospels, was not content just to provide a disjointed catalogue of Jesus' activities. He was concerned to ensure that his readers would draw the correct conclusions from the information he provided. Underlying the details of what Jesus did was the much more important question of who he was. As the story unfolds, there are repeated hints as to how that question should be answered, but it is with this incident that the whole issue of Jesus' identity is explicitly addressed. Peter's acknowledgement of Jesus as (the word 'Christ' is the equivalent in the Greek of the Hebrew Messiah - both words meaning 'anointed') marks the climax of the first half of Mark's Gospel and is the supreme moment of truth for which he has been preparing his readers. However, Jesus is quick to correct any false impression Peter may have of what that entailed. Contrary to what Peter and his fellow-disciples may assume, he will face suffering, rejection and death, as he seeks to fulfil his God-given role, and those who follow him must be prepared to suffer a similar fate. Peter's outspoken protest (v.32) only serves to highlight how much he and the other disciples have still to learn in the short time remaining.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Jesus challenged his followers to make up their minds about him. Is it still important for people to have to make up their minds about Jesus today?

7 MARK 9: 2 – 8

JESUS IS TRANSFIGURED

There is little point in trying to give a precise explanation of what happened. However, it is explained the incident clearly made a profound impression on the disciples concerned. It must have confirmed them in their belief that, despite his own gloomy predictions, they have been right to identify Jesus as someone very special. Here he is seen in the company of Moses and Elijah - two of the all-time 'greats' of the Jewish faith. What is even more significant, they are depicted as fading into the background, giving way to Jesus who consequently emerges as a figure of unchallenged and indisputable supremacy, the ultimate fulfilment of that long and illustrious religious tradition that is represented at its highest and best by Moses, the law giver, and Elijah, the prophet.

How reassuring it must have been for these men to be exposed to such an exhilarating though mysterious experience as they faced the stern and difficult days that lay ahead of them.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

As a result of their experience on the mountain, Peter, James and John were convinced that Jesus was the greatest. How can people be helped to take Jesus seriously today?

8 MARK 11: 1 – 11

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

When Jesus was identified as the Messiah or Christ by Peter and the other disciples at Caesarea Philippi (Mark 8:30), they were given strict instructions not to tell anyone. Perhaps the general public were not ready for such a startling disclosure. But the way Jesus entered Jerusalem suggests that Jesus was now ready to throw all caution to the winds. The prophet Zechariah had encouraged the belief that when eventually the Messiah came, he would make his entry from the Mount of Olives (Zech.14:4) and would ride into the city on a colt, the foal of an ass (Zech. 9:9). By entering Jerusalem as he did, Jesus was openly challenging the city to recognise his true identity. It was a big moment for those who had made the long journey south with him from Caesarea Philippi, and they made the most of it. For the time being, it must have seemed that his fears and gloomy predictions were totally unfounded. The next few days were to prove how wrong they were and how accurately he had read the situation.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

By entering Jerusalem as he did, Jesus challenged people to take sides. Can you identify situations today in which the followers of Jesus may have to be prepared to stand up and be counted?

9 MARK 11: 15 –19

JESUS VISITS THE TEMPLE AGAIN

Since the time of Solomon, the Temple in Jerusalem had been the pride and joy of the Jewish people. It was the place where the God of Israel had chosen to live. The Temple Jesus visited was the second to occupy the site and the area surrounding it had been greatly extended during the last 50 years. There is no evidence to suggest that Jesus was opposed to the Temple as such, but he was deeply disturbed by the money-changers and the dealers who plied their trade in that part of the Temple which was intended to be a place of prayer for non-Jews.

In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the people who came to change their money (they had to pay their temple-tax in a currency which could only be obtained in the Temple) or to purchase their sacrifices, were overcharged in the process.

Given that the Temple authorities and Annas (the former High Priest) had a vested interest in both activities, it is not surprising that they were in the vanguard of those who wanted to destroy him.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

On his visit to the Temple, Jesus showed his deep displeasure at what was happening there. What practices do you think Jesus might find unacceptable in our community and why?

10 MARK 14: 11 – 31

JESUS EATS WITH HIS FRIENDS

Jesus' last meal with his disciples is recalled every time Christians hold a Communion service. According to Mark, the original meal which Jesus shared with his disciples was a Passover meal. The best known and the most widely observed of all the Jewish festivals, Passover celebrates the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. However, Jesus uses the meal to prepare the disciples for his death and to try to explain to them what it will achieve.

He claims that the blood which he will shed will establish a new relationship (a new covenant) between God and man, replacing the old relationship (the old covenant) between God and the Israelites dating back to the days of Moses and Abraham.

The passage ends on a sad note. Peter declares his intention to stand by Jesus, whatever the cost. But Jesus did not share his confidence. Within a matter of hours, Peter's rock-like defiance had collapsed in the face of a comparatively innocuous challenge from one of the High Priest's servants.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

What lessons did Jesus try to teach his disciples at the Last Supper, and how are Christians reminded of these same lessons at a Communion service?

11 MARK 15: 21 – 41

JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

There is a stark simplicity about the story of the crucifixion. In his death, as in his life, Jesus had some unlikely companions - Simon the unsuspecting visitor from North Africa, two hardened criminals, a hostile and unfeeling crowd, a detachment of Roman soldiers dicing for their share of the spoils.

The disciples, who only hours before had protested their unfailing support were, for the most part, conspicuous by their absence. In striking contrast, the quiet dignity and determination with which Jesus faced his ordeal, reflect the continuing confidence he had in his appointed role. The fact that even he, however briefly, came to feel that God might have deserted Him, is a stern reminder of the harsh reality of the physical pain and mental anguish to which he was exposed. It is, however, a measure of his triumph that even a hardened soldier was moved to comment: "Truly this man was the Son of God"

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

Do you think Jesus would have received a better reception in today's Glasgow than in 1st century Jerusalem?

12 MARK 16 : 1 – 8

JESUS IS RAISED FROM THE DEAD

When Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest's palace it was, as he believed, 'to see the end'. That end had apparently arrived with the crucifixion and death of Jesus. But all four Gospels are agreed that it was not the end. The first hint that the story they had to tell might, after all, be a story with a happy ending, came with the discovery that the tomb was empty. All four writers tell a similar, if not identical story, but none does so more simply or dramatically than Mark. Confronted by this totally unexpected turn of events, the women are terror-stricken. It is a perfectly natural response to the unknown and unexpected. The full implications of what they had seen and heard, were still to unfold. As Luke suggests in his introduction to the Book of Acts, what is recorded in the Gospels is not the end of the story but only the story of what Jesus 'began both to do and to teach'.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION

What difference would it have made if Mark had ended his Gospel at the end of the previous Chapter?