

God's story in the Bible

AIMS AND OUTCOMES

- Help participants understand that God's people have always been a journeying people.
- Build awareness that the Bible is the ongoing story of God's communication with man.
- Help understand that the Bible is earthed in real times, real places and with real people.
- Recognise that each story about God's people in the Bible can give us significant insight into our journey of faith today.
- Build more detailed Biblical knowledge to underpin God's story

The activities could be used effectively prior to using the Church Events Timeline and a Local Mapping Exercise to enable participants to see how God has used his people locally in the past, how he's using them now and to explore how he might use them in the future. It's ideal for use with young people, but is also perfectly suitable for other groups.

Bible timeline activity

Before the session:

Print a copy of PP God's People LF God's story in the Bible timeline RESOURCES.docx

1. Cut up the timeline strips.
2. Cut up the date strips.
3. Copy the event timeline overview (1 per person)

How to:

1. Lay out the date strips.
2. Distribute the timeline strips so that everyone has at least one.
3. Ask participants to arrange the strips correct date order vertically.
4. Ask the group to move any events which did not take place in what is Israel today, slightly to the right.
5. Encourage discussion.

Discussion starters.

Ask the participants what they notice about the timeline. (*All took place in a fairly concentrated period of time, you might like to refer to the period of silence before Jesus was born*)

What do they notice about where things took place. (*You might want to say something about the size of Israel as a country and see if the group can come up with a country known to them which is of similar size.*)



Bible mapping activity

There are two ways of preparing for this activity, depending on the resources and space you have available and the people who are taking part:

(a) Copy and *enlarge* a map of the Fertile Crescent in ancient times. Examples can be found online or use the one included in this pack (PP God's People LF God's story in the Bible PARTICIPANT'S map.docx.) Copy and cut up the list of locations (PP God's People SG God's story in the Bible LEADER'S map.docx). Or

(b) Print out PP God's People LF God's story in the Bible PARTICIPANT'S map.docx. one per group of three participants. Copy and cut up the list of locations (PP God's People SG God's story in the Bible LEADER'S map.docx).

You will also need

- a copy of the leader's map sheet.
- Paper and pens.
- Bibles.

How the activity works

Using (a)

1. Place enlarged map on a table.
2. Give at least one location strip to each participant.
3. As a group, ask the participants to place the locations on the map.
4. When the group have finished, show them the leaders map and enjoy any confusions together!
5. Divide the group into pairs or triplets and ask them to list what they know about events that happened at the various locations.

Using (b) *(If using this with a competitive group or with Young People you may want to have a prize at the end if they get all the answers right)*

1. When the small groups have their maps, read out the locations and ask them to write onto their maps.
2. When complete share the leaders map so that they can correct their map or heartily congratulate themselves!
3. On sheets of paper ask them to list what they know about events that happened at the various locations.

Some ideas for input:

In all cases, ask the participants for their feedback on the Bible events which they have identified as happening in each of the locations. Refer back to the Bible timeline and the significant events which happened over a relatively short period in world history.



God's chosen people were a very small group of people who had little influence on the world scene. Their history, as we read it in Scripture, took place in a relatively small area and would have appeared to have little significance to anyone else. However, they were chosen by God for a purpose, they were real people, who lived in real places at certain points in history. Their lives were complicated and messy, they made mistakes and had triumphs, but throughout God was moving them forward into closer relationship with him.

We see through the events identified in the exercise (there are others!) that the Bible is the ongoing story of God's communication with people. Each story about God's people in the Bible can give us significant insight into our journey of faith today.

How significant do we feel as God's people today?
What's our honest feeling about our effectiveness for God in our Parish?
In what ways might we use the examples of God's people in the Bible to help us journey in faith together?