

SESSION ONE: Is this book reliable? *Luke 1 v 1-4*
Slower and Full Route

1. Written accounts (v 1), eyewitnesses (v 2), and Luke's own investigations (v 3).
2. Probably to tell us that he's not making this up on his own – there are other accounts we can check his against (for us, that's the three other Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, and what Jesus' closest friends teach in the rest of the New Testament).
3. Eyewitnesses. This matters because these were people who were actually at the events Luke is describing, who saw and spoke to and knew Jesus.
4. He's taking his job of writing down what happened seriously. He's looked into everything, and he's done it with care.
5. He wants us to be certain that what we have already been taught (or will be taught in his book) about Christianity is actually true, factual, historical.

SESSION TWO: What was happening at Christmas? *Luke 2 v 8-20*
Quick, Slower and Full Route

1. That in David's town (Bethlehem) a Saviour, Christ, the Lord, has been born as a baby—and this is fantastic news (v 10)!

3. Not to be scared (even though we're seeing heaven come to earth, which is actually quite terrifying) but to be joyful that God has come to live among us.

4. They praise God.

The coming of the Christ means that there can now be peace (in the context, this means peace between God and humans), to anyone "on whom his favour rests". Jesus' coming will offer a way for anyone to ask God to make them at peace with Him.

5. They decide to go and check it out (v 15); they find that the angel's claim in verse 12 is true (v 16); they tell others (v 17); and they praise God (v 20).

6. This is extending question five, since we can go through the same "process"—checking out whether it's true (for example by reading a Gospel, which you're doing!); and if we have "seen him" (v 17) and realised that he is Saviour, Christ and Lord, telling others and praising God.

SESSION THREE: What was John the Baptist's message? *Luke 3 v 1-22*

Full Route

1. "Repentance". Verses 10-14 tell us this means sharing what we have with others instead of keeping hold of it; not taking from others to serve ourselves; being content with what we have. These are all ways in which God asks people to live in his world: repentance is a Bible word meaning to "turn around", from living for ourselves to living for God.
2. "Sins". Yes, people today still need their sins forgiving. A useful definition of sins is that they all stem from an attitude of saying "Shove off God. I'm in charge. No to your reign". People do that today just as much as they did in John's time.
4. John pours water onto people (as he baptises them). Jesus will give the Holy Spirit and fire (in other words, God's presence. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, and fire in the Bible often is a sign of God's presence – have a look, for instance, at Acts 2 v 3-4). John is nowhere near as powerful as Jesus; and he isn't important enough (compared to Jesus) even to tie up his shoelaces for him!
6. Repent ie: turn back to God.
7. Herod's evil behaviour isn't completely clear from the verse. Herod, who was the local tetrarch, or king, had married his brother's wife, Herodias (see Mark 6 v 17-18). And John had told Herod that he shouldn't be living like that; he'd told Herod he needed to repent.
9. That Jesus had the Holy Spirit; and that Jesus was God's Son, who God loved and was delighted by. (This is a glimpse of who God is: he is one God, in three persons. We usually call those three persons, each different but each fully God, the Father (here just called "God"), the Son (Jesus), and the Spirit. The term people often use to describe God is "Trinity": three persons in one God.)
10. We should treat him as God himself (v 22). And we should want to find out how we can avoid being burned up like chaff (v 17), and how we can instead be filled with the Spirit (v 16) and gathered in by him (v 17).

SESSION FOUR: How was Jesus tempted? *Luke 4 v 1-13*

Full Route

1. Because the devil would love to get God's own Son to listen to the devil and reject living God's way. He would love to get Jesus to do something which stops God being pleased with him, and which stops him being able to offer people the Holy Spirit.

2. God probably allowed Jesus to be tempted so that Jesus could show the devil, and us, that he was always going to live as God's Son, and so live God's way in God's world. We sometimes give in to temptation; but as Jesus resists the devil, we're seeing that he was a perfect man.

3. Because he hasn't eaten anything for forty days (v 2), and the devil is tempting him to make some miraculous bread (v 3).

4. He knows that the Bible says it is even more important to live God's way than to have food to eat.

5. He's being tempted to ask for and enjoy great worldly power and authority, by worshipping the devil (v 7).

6. Again, Jesus quotes what the Bible says. His priority is to worship and serve his Father, not to get power for himself.

7. The devil quotes the Bible to Jesus (v 10-11)! And he's giving Jesus a chance to prove who he really is, the "Son of God" (v 9).

8. Because Jesus would be forcing his Father to send angels to save him. He would essentially be saying: "God, I'm not sure you really care about me, so I'm setting you a test to see if you do".

9. Jesus was often tempted—and this period in the desert wasn't the only time the devil tempted him.

10. As humans, we all face temptation, just as Jesus did. We're tempted in very similar ways as Jesus was: to think that our physical well-being matters more than our spiritual health; to stop worshipping God in order to gain more power or popularity in this world; to not really trust God to look after us unless he passes some kind of "test" we set. And, though the devil doesn't appear in person to most people (it's often much more effective for him to convince people he doesn't actually exist), he does to some people as he did here to Jesus.

The difference is not so much in the devil tempting Jesus, but Jesus' response to it. Despite being under enormous pressure, on his own, and hungry, he would not give

in to the devil. He kept living as God tells humanity to in the Bible. We give into temptation every day, one way or another: Jesus never did.

SESSION FIVE: Is it worth trying again? *Luke 5 v 1-11*
Full Route

1. Jesus asks Simon to push the boat out from the shore, so the people can see him as he teaches them (v 3).

Jesus has crowds around him who realize that what he says is “the word of God” (v 1); Simon must have realised that this man was in some way special.

2. To put down his fishing nets to catch a load of fish.

3. They’ve been trying to catch fish all night and have caught absolutely nothing! But Simon has another go, because Jesus has told him to.

5. He catches so many fish that there are too many to fit easily into two whole boats. (Which is particularly amazing when you remember they’d caught nothing in hours!)

6. Simon tells Jesus to leave him, because he (Simon) knows he is a “sinful man”. Simon realises that this miraculous catch of fish means that in some way God has come to them (though he doesn’t yet understand exactly who Jesus is). And he knows that he isn’t perfect (he’s sinful), so it’s dangerous for him to be in the presence of the perfect God. He doesn’t deserve to be in God’s presence; and he is terrified he won’t be able to survive in God’s presence.

7. Jesus reassures Simon that he doesn’t need to be afraid! Jesus hasn’t come to judge Simon, but to make friends with him. And he tells him that from now on he’ll catch men instead of fish; Jesus is going to use Simon to bring men into the presence of God.

8. They leave everything to follow Jesus. They even leave their careers behind. It can only be that they realise that following Jesus is far more important (and exciting!) than anything else in life; and so following Jesus is worth giving up anything else to do.

NOTE: Jesus later gave Simon a new name. He called him “Peter” (see 6 v 12-14).

SESSION SIX: How should we treat those who dislike us? *Luke 6 v 27-36*
Full Route

1. The first human enemies of Jesus and his followers were the Pharisees and teachers of the law (5 v 21, 30; 6 v 7, 11). These were some of the Jewish religious leaders. They were meant to be looking forward to God's Christ coming; but when he did arrive, they didn't want to listen to him so they opposed him.
3. We're to love, help and pray for people who mistreat us.
4. If someone is nasty to us, instead of being nasty back we should carry on being kind, even if they are nasty again. If someone takes, takes, takes from us, we should still be generous towards them. It's worth thinking about practical ways to do these things (this may involve our time as well as our possessions).
5. We'd love them to treat us with love, help us, and pray for us – so that's the way Jesus wants us to treat them!
6. Jesus wants his followers not only to do good to those who are good to them (virtually everyone does that!), but to do good to those who don't do good to them.
7. Think about things like time and acts of kindness as well as possessions and money.
8. The "reward" seems to be that we'll be "sons (or daughters) of the Most High". Anyone who follows Jesus and seeks to live as he asks will, amazingly, be adopted by God as his children. That's some reward!

SESSION SEVEN: Why do people love Jesus? *Luke 7 v 36-50*
Slower and Full Route

1. It was “sinful”. It may well be that this is a polite way of saying that she was a prostitute.
2. She goes to the dinner party Jesus is at; she weeps as she stands near him, so much that his feet get wet with her tears; she wipes his feet with her hair (his feet would have been dirty and smelly from walking along in a hot and dusty climate); she kisses his feet; she pours expensive perfume she’s brought with her on them. There would probably have been great shock at someone doing this to someone’s smelly feet; embarrassment that she’s been able to “break in” to the party; and revulsion that a woman like this, who has lived this way, has gatecrashed a classy dinner.
3. He thinks that if Jesus really was a prophet, he’d know this woman was a sinner—and therefore he would get rid of her. A prophet of God surely wouldn’t want to be touched by a woman who lived as this lady did!
5. The person who has a greater debt cancelled will love the money-lender more, because they’ve had more debt wiped out by him.
Jesus is making several points to Simon, the Pharisee:
 - He has debts to God (sins) that he needs God to cancel, just as this woman does.
 - Because this woman has lived in such a sinful way, she can appreciate much more than Simon how amazing it is that Jesus forgives sinners, and so she will love Jesus more.
 - This woman has actually treated Jesus in a far more loving way than Simon has, because she appreciates that it’s an honour for her to be friends with him, whereas Simon perhaps thinks it’s an honour for Jesus to be invited to be friends with him!
6. The woman’s love is greater as shown by the way she acts towards Jesus. How we feel about Jesus reveals itself in what we do for him.
8. Because she knows she is a great sinner, and yet she knows that she can still approach Jesus and find forgiveness from him.
9. Because he claims to be able to forgive sins. The only person who can forgive someone is the person that someone has wronged. Sin is wronging God—so only God can forgive our sins. So the guests are, unsurprisingly, offended by Jesus’ claim to be able to forgive sins ie: that he’s God.
10. The woman has faith: she trusts that if she comes to Jesus, and loves Jesus, he will accept and forgive her. Her faith means she’s forgiven, and at peace with God, despite being a sinner.

SESSION EIGHT: How can I be changed by Jesus' teaching? *Luke 8 v 4-15*
Quick, Slower and Full Route

1. The "word of God" is the teaching of Jesus, about Jesus.
The sower is Jesus.
The soil represents the different types of people who hear Jesus' teaching, which produces different responses to what he says.
2. As we hear Jesus' teaching (v 11), we need to respond to it by believing it (v 12) and sticking with living by it (v 13-14), so that we can be saved (v 12, 15). We need not only to "hear" Jesus' teaching by hearing the words he says; we need to "hear" his teaching by actually doing something about it (v 8).
3. They don't respond to Jesus' teaching at all.
4. Because the devil doesn't want people to believe in Jesus so that they can be saved (ie: have eternal life). He'd rather people continued to ignore and reject Jesus and his teaching.
5. They respond to Jesus with great joy—but they don't carry on following him.
6. "Times of testing": when life as a Christian gets tough, they stop being Christians.
7. They live as Christians for a while, but their faith ends up being choked by other things in life, so they don't keep following Jesus.
8. Worries (v 14) choke our faith because they stop us relying on Jesus, and instead suggest to us that how life goes is all up to us, not God.
Riches can choke our faith because we live to gain or keep wealth instead of living Jesus' way. Money becomes more important to us than Jesus.
Pleasures choke our faith because we can end up chasing them, and prioritizing them, instead of Jesus.
9. They yield a huge crop. Just as soil exists to produce a crop, so this type of human produces and enjoys real life.
10. They don't only hear the word, they "retain" it (v 15). They make following Jesus and living his way their priority above all other things, even when it's hard.

SESSION NINE: What does it cost to follow Jesus? *Luke 9 v 18-27*
Slower and Full Route

1. People thought Jesus might be John the Baptist (who we met in chapter 3); or Elijah (a prophet, or messenger of God, in the Old Testament, who people thought would one day return to Israel); or another prophet who'd come back to life.
3. Because Peter isn't saying Jesus is simply a messenger from God from centuries before; he's saying he's the Christ, the King God had been promising to send for centuries, through those prophets.
5. Probably so that it won't come as a shock to them when it happens; and also so that Jesus can begin to teach them about *why* he had come to die and rise again. The connection between what Peter says and how Jesus responds is that now that the disciples know *who Jesus is*, he's going to start explaining to them *why he has come*. Everyone was expecting the Christ to be a political leader, a military warrior; instead, Jesus says, the Christ is going to be rejected and killed.
6. It means denying what is easiest or most pleasurable for us, and it means sacrificing daily ourselves, our interests, and our comfort; in a way, "dying" to ourselves daily as we live with Jesus as our King.
7. Because if we give our lives to Jesus, he'll "save" us ie: give us eternal life.
8. If we try to hang onto our lives, and make life now our be-all-and-end-all, then one day we'll lose our life (v 24). There's no point in having everything that the world can offer now, but then losing everything, including our lives, in the future (v 25). On the other hand, if we give up our lives (v 24), if we put Jesus before ourselves, then we'll find ourselves having real life, for ever. It's a strange truth that giving up control over our lives, and living for someone else, is how we find real, satisfying, endless life!
9. Either by turning our backs on him and what he says, and getting on with our lives as though he isn't there; or knowing who he is but not standing up for him whenever it's hard eg: when people at work are laughing about the Christian message, or when someone asks us whether we are a Christian or not.
10. If we don't acknowledge Jesus as being someone we know now, then he won't acknowledge us as someone he knows when he returns to judge the world and take his people to eternal life (see 13 v 25-27, which is part of Session 15). The warning is that if we don't let Jesus be Lord of our lives now, then he won't let us have life with him when he returns.

SESSION TEN: How can I love God and my neighbour? *Luke 10 v 25-42*
Full Route

1. It's hugely important! If there is eternal perfect life with God, how we get it is more crucial than any other question we can ask.
2. Essentially, the man's answer is that to have eternal life, we need to love God with everything we have, and love our neighbour as well as we love ourself.
3. This is a very important question. It matters because it's about how we should treat other people in God's world, and what it looks like to obey God's teaching (v 27). You might well feel it's not *as* important as the question in v 25, though!
4. To really grasp the shock of these verses, you need to know who each of these people are. The first is a Jewish priest, set apart to serve God. A Levite is another term for "priest"—and both these men pass the half-dead man by. Samaritans were hated by the Jews, and considered worthless—so it would have been very shocking for Jewish ears to hear that, of the three men, it's the Samaritan who takes pity on the injured Jew.
5. The Samaritan has pity, unlike the men we'd expect to, the Jewish religious elite (v 31-32).
The Samaritan actively gives up time and effort to help the needy man.
The Samaritan gives financially for the sake of the man, and is willing to give more.
6. To do the work, as her question suggests. She is very busy doing things, making preparations and working for Jesus—and she's getting very cross that Mary isn't helping her!
7. Jesus says the most important thing is to do what "Mary has chosen" (v 42). She "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said" (v 39), and Jesus says she has "chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her". The important thing to see is that what ultimately counts, eternally, is having a relationship with Jesus, spending time with and listening to him. It is not what we do, but who we know, that counts!
8. One suggestion would be making sure we spend a bit of time each day listening to Jesus speak to us in the Bible, and speaking to him in prayer. (If this is a new idea, the next two sessions conveniently focus on praying!)

SESSION ELEVEN: How should I pray? *Luke 11 v 1-4*
Slower and Full Route

1. It's helpful to call God "Father" because it reminds us that the God of the universe listens to us as his children, if we're followers of Jesus, his Son. It's amazing to know that the most powerful Person in the universe is the Father of every Christian! That will make us excited about speaking to him!
2. Because he's the perfect Creator of everything, who deserves to be recognised and respected by every bit of his creation, including humans. When someone does something good, they deserve to be praised for it. God is infinitely good and has done more amazing things than we can appreciate; he deserves infinite honour!
3. We should want God to be King in more and more areas of everyone's lives because that's what he deserves; it's how we were made to live, and so it's how life is most enjoyable; and because as people live with God as King, the world becomes a better place.
And we should want to see the final day come soon because that's when God will finally get the honour he deserves, and when his people will get to enjoy life in his perfect kingdom.
4. Because it reminds us that we rely on God for absolutely everything. It's easy to forget, in a country full of supermarkets, that each bit of food is a gift of God that we depend on him for.
5. We need God to forgive us because we've sinned against him. We're in his debt and we can't repay it; so we need him to wipe our slate clean.
6. Because we can only ask God to do for us what we're willing to do for others. If we won't forgive those who wrong us, how can we dare to ask God to lovingly forgive all that we've done to wrong him?

SESSION TWELVE: Will God answer my prayers? *Luke 11 v 5-13*

Full Route

2. That we should boldly and persistently ask God to help us, and that he will hear and answer us—though maybe not immediately!
3. God is not annoyed by our asking for things; he does not sleep, or have a biological family.
4. He will hear us when we ask for things, and he will give us what we need.
5. That just as human fathers (though they're flawed, or "evil", v 13) give their children what they need when they ask for it, so will God.
6. Human fathers are evil (though they know how to give their children good things); God is much better because he is perfect—he never makes mistakes or lets his children down (as human fathers sometimes do).
7. God will give us himself, living in us through the Spirit, if we ask. This is a better gift than any other. You might like to look up a few passages to show why the Spirit is such a wonderful gift from the Father:
Romans 8 v 16—he gives Christians confidence that they are God's children.
Galatians 5 v 22-25—he changes Christians to be more and more like Jesus.
Ephesians 1 v 13-14—having the Spirit is a guarantee that Christians will reach their heavenly inheritance, and a foretaste of how amazing that inheritance will be.
All of which should encourage us to ask God to give us his Spirit, and to work in us through his Spirit!

SESSION THIRTEEN: How can Jesus help me with money worries? *Luke 12 v 13-34*
Full Route

3. We shouldn't make money and possessions our main aim in life, as though that's what life is all about (v 15). We don't know when our life will end, and we can't take our wealth with us (v 20). God says only fools make wealth and comfort their goal; sensible people will be rich towards God, making him the most important thing in life (v 21).

4. There's nothing wrong with saving money. Jesus' point is that we mustn't rely on money, thinking it's what will give us a good future; nor must we make having money our main aim in life.

5. By giving what we have to him: being prepared, for example, to give our money away to help his people and to help people hear about his Son. (There are many other ways we can be "rich towards God" (UK NIV); this is just one. Spend some time thinking of others).

6. They worried about where they'd get food to eat and clothes to wear.

7.

- Life is about more than food and clothes: it's not what's most important (v 23).
- God feeds birds and clothes flowers: we're much more valuable to him than they are, so we can look to him to give us what we need rather than worrying about it (v 24, 27-28).
- Worrying doesn't actually achieve anything! (v 25-6).
- God knows what we need (v 30).
- If we are seeking to live as part of God's kingdom, then as part of his kingdom, God will give us what he knows we need (v 31). (This doesn't mean that he'll always give Christians food, clothing, and life. But he will for as long as he wants them to be here, and then he'll take them to his kingdom at the end of their life. Since Christians know where they're headed beyond death, they don't need to worry about what this life holds for them.)

8. We should set our heart on living as part of God's kingdom now, and on reaching God's perfect kingdom when we die.

9. It means to put living for God ("seek his kingdom") before all other priorities (v 30-31)—you might like to think about what this would look like in your own circumstances. And it means to not be afraid (v 32) of the future, or of missing out in the present, because you know that you already have a place in God's kingdom through following Christ, and there's nothing that the world can offer that's better than that.

10. Sell things we own and give to the poor, and instead of hanging on to our earthly possessions, focus on making sure we will have riches in heaven for ever (which we do by following Jesus).

11. God our Father wants to give us the kingdom—to allow us to have him as King in our lives, now and for ever. So we don't need to fear (v 32). If what we really care about (our "treasure") is with God in heaven, instead of in something the world offers, our joy will never fade, disappear or be taken away.

SESSION FOURTEEN: How can I be ready for Jesus? *Luke 12 v 35-48*
Full Route

1. That one day he will return to his world, unexpectedly and without warning (v 40). When he does, he'll serve those who are waiting for him (v 37).
2. We need to be ready (v 40) and watching out for Jesus' return (v 36-37). If we are, then we will eat with him and be served by him (v 37).
3. We don't know *when* he will return. But we do know that he will return!
4. We can be ready by recognising and living with him as our master now, in preparation for when he returns to his world, just as the servants in the parable did (v 36-37).
5. That he has left people the responsibility of looking after others in his world until he returns (v 42); that when he does return, those who have lived as he asks will enjoy the world and all that's in it (Jesus' "possessions", v 44); and that for some, Jesus' return will bring punishment (v 46).
6. That we show we know that Jesus is going to return by using any position of responsibility for others to serve and look after them, rather than to further our own ends.
7. The parables are addressed to those who have heard the message about Jesus (ie: us!) We need to recognise and live for Jesus in order to be ready for his return; we need to show we are ready by looking after his people in whatever way he's given us to do that.
8.
 - a) Puts him in charge of his possessions (v 44).
 - b) Punishes him (v 46-47).
 - c) He will reward those who have done as he asked; he will punish those who have lived as though he wasn't coming back, by shutting them out of his kingdom (v 46).

SESSION FIFTEEN: Can I leave it too late? *Luke 13 v 22-30*
Slower and Full Route

2. Yes – it's a question about being saved, about the way to eternal life—pretty important!

3. Give everything we have to making sure we enter (ie: go into eternal life) by the “narrow door”. The end of the verse seems to be talking about the future (as the next verse is)—Jesus is encouraging us to listen to how he says we can have eternal life (ie: by following and trusting him), because lots of people assume they are going to go to heaven, but will find that they aren't, because they didn't listen to Jesus and enter through the “narrow door”.

4. Because one day it will be too late—the door into eternal life will be closed and no one will be able to enter through it anymore.

5.

- Don't leave it too late to turn to Jesus and enter eternal life (v 24-25).
- Don't think that just because you know about Jesus, or have heard his teaching, that you'll be fine for eternity. What counts is knowing him (v 26-27).
- Being shut out of the kingdom of God is the worst experience anyone can ever know (v 28).

6. Because they are not “known” by Jesus: they don't have a personal relationship with him. Instead they are “evildoers” (ie: sinners, who aren't seeking to live God's way).

8. There will be people from all over the world who do enjoy eternal life in God's kingdom.

9. It'll be amazing, better than we can possibly imagine.

10. Jesus is saying that many who the world sees as “last”, as failures, will be “first” in eternity—they'll enjoy life with God in his kingdom. Equally, many who are considered successful or “first” now will be shut out—or “last”.

This is a warning to us, that success now doesn't mean we will be OK beyond death. But it's also a great promise to anyone who gives things up for Jesus, that one day they will be “first” along with him in God's perfect kingdom.

SESSION SIXTEEN: How does God react to my excuses? *Luke 14 v 15-24*
Full Route

1. Jesus' original hearers were invited by Jesus in person, and also by the prophets God sent in Old Testament times. We are invited by Jesus through the New Testament, for example by this Gospel you're reading through now!
2. About viewing a newly bought field, and testing out some new oxen. The excuses are to do with business and career, which we consider to be pretty important!
4. Having just got married is the third excuse. It seems like a good excuse: family and relationships (particularly marriage) are very important, and many would say they should come first in life.
6. The master is angry at excuses like these. We can see why he's angry if we compare his invitation with the excuses. He has prepared an amazing feast—the field and the oxen (v 18, 19) could wait! The new husband or wife (v 20) could be brought to the feast! He has prepared an amazing feast; business, career and family are not as important as God's invitation to his kingdom. If we decide that we would rather have these things than respond to God's invitation, he is rightly angry.
7. This is a tricky question—but hopefully, by this stage in Luke's Gospel, you've seen that spiritually speaking you're not able-bodied, but rather, crippled by your sin, your failure to live with God as King. Being invited into his kingdom despite being sinners is amazing!
8. Because he wants the house to be full. We're being told that Jesus wants his kingdom to be full of people who've responded to his invitation: he loves to invite people to join his banquet.
9. Jesus' teaching is both a promise and a warning. It's a promise that no matter who we are, we can enjoy kingdom life if we respond to Jesus' invitation with a "yes" (we don't need to do any more than that!). But equally the warning is not to make excuses of any kind, because refusing to come into the kingdom now means we will be shut out of it for ever (v 24).

SESSION SEVENTEEN: How can I come back to God? *Luke 15 v 11-24*
Quick, Slower and Full Route

1. The son wants his “share”; his inheritance of all the father has. In other words, he wants his father’s possessions, but not his father: he wants to live as though his father is dead, and he wants to use the “share” for himself.

This is like our attitude to God. We love enjoying the gifts he gives us (life, love, possessions, friends, etc) but we don’t want to know and live with him. We would rather God didn’t exist, and we live as though he didn’t, wasting his gifts by using them for our own ends.

2. The father lets the younger son use his share in that way. He lets the son leave the estate and live without reference to him.

God doesn’t force us to let him be God in our lives. He gives us what we want: life without him.

3. Life was awful. What had promised to give him fulfilment, satisfaction and joy delivered only poverty and regret. Jewish people considered pigs “unclean”, so to say this son ended up feeding pigs (v 15) is a way of saying he’s hit rock bottom.

4. Life lived apart from God promises much but it doesn’t deliver. Sooner or later most people realise that what they thought would make them happy and contented, doesn’t.

5. He “came to his senses”: he actually thought about how his life had turned out—and he realised that life in his father’s house (even as a hired hand) was considerably better than the life he’d made for himself outside his father’s estate.

6. He feels he can return to his father and admit he’s sinned against him. He knows he can’t be his son anymore after what he’s done; he hopes he can live as a servant of his father’s.

7. We need to accept that life lived our way without God hasn’t worked. We need to accept that in our attitude towards God, we’ve sinned. We need to accept that we don’t deserve anything from God.

8. He does what he’s decided to do. He returns to his father, and he tells his father that he knows he’s sinned and he knows he doesn’t deserve to have a relationship with him anymore.

9. We must come back to God. We must do so admitting that we’ve sinned and don’t deserve anything from him. We do it just as this younger son did—by talking, by praying.

10. The father is filled with compassion and leaves his house, running to his son and hugging him (v 20). In the society Jesus was living in, this would have been hugely

humiliating for a landowning man; the father is giving up his reputation and dignity in order to welcome his son back.

The father won't accept the son back as a servant; he welcomes him back as his son (v 22). He gives him the best he has (v 22), and he organises a party to celebrate the son's return (v 23).

God welcomes us back as his children when we return to him and admit we've sinned. He lets us live with him, giving us the best of what he has, and he loves it when we return.

11. As though we were dead, and are now alive again; as though we were lost without him, but now we're found, secure and safe with him again.

The language is deliberately strong. Life without God is like being dead: that's where it leads to. Life with God is real life, for ever.

SESSION EIGHTEEN: What kind of person does God accept? *Luke 18 v 9-14*
Full Route

1. He is not an extortioner (as most tax collectors were—they taxed people slightly more than the Romans wanted, to keep a slice for themselves). He is not unjust in his dealings with others. He is not having an affair. And, positively, he fasts regularly and gives away 10% (a tithe) of his income.

2. Verse 9—he was trusting in himself for being righteous ie: right with God. And his confidence came from comparing his own performance and goodness with that of others, and thinking himself better than they were. In this way, he treated others with contempt. Verse 14 suggests he was proud—he “exalted” himself.

4. That he’s a sinner.

5. That he needs mercy from God, because he doesn’t deserve to be “justified” (for a definition of that word, see question seven). It’s right for him to feel this because he is a sinner! As a tax collector, he’s working for the Romans, the enemies of God’s people, Israel, and he may well have been taxing a little too much in order to keep more for himself. But, as we’ve seen, we are all sinners—whoever this man is and whatever job he has, he’s right to feel the way he does.

7. Because those who are humble enough to know they don’t deserve to be right with God are those who will ask for mercy, which God loves to give. But “everyone who exalts himself”, who thinks they’re good enough to be right with God, won’t think they need to ask for mercy, so won’t get it, and will end up being humbled as they discover they aren’t justified before God (have a look back at 13 v 23-30).

8. That we mustn’t think that what we do, and the fact other people behave worse than us, means we’re right with God. We need to accept that we’re sinners, be humble, and beg God for his undeserved mercy. It is people who do that (like Simon Peter in Luke 5 v 1-11) who are justified by God.

9. By following the example of the tax collector: by speaking to God humbly, admitting we’re a sinner, and asking for mercy. And by avoiding the attitude of the Pharisee, who thinks he’s “good enough” for God.

10. God will give us the riches and glory of relationship with him for eternity if we admit our sin and beg for undeserved mercy.

SESSION NINETEEN: What does the communion service mean? *Luke 22 v 14-20*
Full Route

1. Suffering (v 15); but beyond that, eating (v 16) and drinking (v 18) in the kingdom of God.
2. When God establishes his kingdom on earth, when Jesus returns.
3. They'll be amazing! It will be like a massive, perfect party.
4. His body being given for his followers ie: his death on the cross.
5. "For" here means "on behalf of". Jesus died on behalf of, or "for the sake of" (or perhaps even "in place of") his followers. Jesus is getting at the truth that in giving himself to death, he died the death of all Christians, so that they could have eternal life instead of facing eternal death (ie: existence outside God's kingdom).
6. By breaking bread and eating it with other Christians ie: by sharing Communion (also called the Eucharist and the Lord's Supper).
7. The "new covenant in my blood", which Jesus would pour out. Again, Jesus is pointing us towards his death.
8. The "new covenant" is the new, unique way that people can relate to God through Jesus' death. His death means that anyone can have their sins taken and dealt with by Jesus. They can be seen by God as he sees Jesus (ie: perfect), and live for ever with Jesus in God's kingdom. That's the "new deal" God offers: all we have to do is accept his Son as our Lord and Saviour.
9. He was going to die to achieve a new "Passover". His death would mean that people could now be spared from God's destruction, and saved from their enemy, the devil. In giving his body and his blood on his people's behalf in his death on the cross, Jesus established a way for a perfect God and sinful people to come into relationship with each other eternally.

SESSION TWENTY: What happens when I let Jesus down? *Luke 22 v 31-34, 54-62*
Full Route

1. Jesus is clear that Satan, the devil, is real (as we've already seen in 4 v 1-13). Satan wants to "sift" the disciples (the "you" in v 31 is plural) "like wheat". "Sift like wheat" was a saying meaning "to take someone apart". Satan wants to take Peter apart—to see what he (and the disciples) is really made of.
2. Jesus is praying for Peter. Peter will need God's help to get through Satan's attack on him with his faith still in Jesus—this help is important because without God's help, Peter won't come through.
3. He's to "strengthen his brothers"—in other words, support other Christians. It seems that once he's known what it's like to be attacked by Satan, to let Jesus down, and to turn back to Jesus with faith, he'll be able to encourage and help other Christians who are facing attack.
4. Peter thinks he'll be able to go to his death for Jesus' sake, whereas Jesus knows that in fact in the next few hours Peter will deny even knowing him three times. There's a huge gap between Peter's confidence in his own bravery, and Jesus' knowledge of what Peter is really made of!
5. Perhaps Peter was caught off guard. But more likely, the fact that Peter couldn't even tell a servant girl and a couple of other people that he was a follower of Jesus shows just how much of a coward he was. He had promised to go to his death for Jesus (v 33); in the end, he couldn't even tell a young girl that he was "with him" (v 56).
7. Jesus turns and looks at Peter (it must have been an awful moment for both of them: Jesus denied by his closest friend, and Peter suddenly remembering what Jesus had predicted would happen). Peter knows exactly what he's done: and he ends up crying at his own failure to follow Jesus properly.
9. Jesus said that Peter (Simon) would turn back; that he would still be able to be Jesus' friend and follower even after what he'd done. In 24 v 34 we find that Jesus, after he'd risen, appeared to Peter (here called Simon); and John 21 v 15-19 records a conversation between the risen Jesus and Peter.
10. To turn back—and receive forgiveness from Jesus and inclusion in his family (so fellow Christians are still our "brothers"). Notice that often, as with Peter, turning back begins with tears (v 62) at the way we've let Jesus down.

SESSION TWENTY-ONE: How do I respond to Jesus' death? *Luke 23 v 32-47*
Quick, Slower and Full Route

1. By asking God to forgive those who are crucifying him, who don't know who the man they're executing is. To the soldiers, Jesus was simply a convicted criminal, and they were just doing their job.

This is amazing—that Jesus, in all that pain, should be praying for those who are causing, shows his great love for the undeserving.

2. They sneer (v 35) and mock him (v 36).

3. He hurls insults at him. His point seems to be that if Jesus really is God's Christ, he will be able to get off his cross and get the two criminals off too. Since he isn't doing that, this criminal thinks he's a fraud.

4. He does three things:

- admits that he is facing death, and that he deserves death because of what he's done (v 40-41).
- accepts that Jesus doesn't deserve death (v 41), and that he is in charge of a kingdom that lies beyond death (v 42).
- asks Jesus to give him a place in his kingdom. ("Remember" means "remember and act on what you've remembered". It's a bit like remembering you need to lock your front door: you don't just remember, you act on what you've remembered and lock it!)

The reason he reacts so differently is because he realises who Jesus is: an innocent man who is God's promised King.

5. Jesus promises that this criminal will be with him in heaven that day.

People who get into heaven are those who, like this criminal, realise that they are facing death deservedly, and that there's nothing they can do to get into God's kingdom; but who simply ask King Jesus for a place in his kingdom.

6. In Amos 8, God looks forward to a day of judgment. It's a judgment on those who've turned away from him and worshipped other "gods" (v 14)—and the judgment on those people is death (end of v 14). The sign that this day has come will be the sun going down at noon, and darkness during the day (v 9).

This enables us to understand the unnatural darkness as Jesus hangs on the cross. God is showing that his judgment is falling, the judgment of death for turning away from him (ie: sin). But of course, the one dying is his Son. It is Jesus, who has always obeyed his Father, who is dying under God's judgment. This is what he meant when he told his followers his body would be given "for", or "on behalf of", theirs (22 v 19, see Session 19).

7. The barrier between God's presence and sinful people has been torn down. Jesus' death means there is now no "no entry" sign between God and us. We can come into his presence.

8. Jesus is trusting his Father, giving his spirit to him. And he still seems in control—he dies when he chooses to, once the curtain has been torn.

9. That Jesus was a “righteous man”, or “innocent man”. In 22 v 70, Jesus said he was the Son of God. So he’s either not the Son of God and so guilty of blasphemy, or is the Son of God and so innocent/righteous. So the centurion is saying that he recognises that Jesus is who he said he was—God’s Son and God’s Christ. Everything Jesus said pointed to who he was: his praying for those killing him, his promising the criminal he’d give him a place in paradise, his trusting God with his death.

After this session in the booklets you’ll find a “Where you’re at now” section. If you’re not doing Session 22 together (ie: you’re on the Quick or Slower Route), the idea is that both of you look through this section on your own, before you next meet up together. It’s a chance to think through what you believe, and how you’ve responded to what you’ve seen so far in the Gospel of Luke.

And, if you’re not doing Session 22 or Session 24 (ie: you’re on the Quick or Slower Route), have a look at the “What next?” section on page 60. Hopefully, you’ve enjoyed looking through Luke’s Gospel together, and this page helps you think about what you might want to do next.

If you are doing Session 22 together (ie: you’re on the Full Route), the “Where you’re at now” section is best done after you next meet up together.

SESSION TWENTY-TWO: What happened on Easter Sunday? *Luke 24 v 1-12*
Full Route

1. Because the stone is “rolled away” (v 2), instead of sealing off the entrance to the tomb (see Mark 16 v 3, which adds that the women were worried about how they would be able to move this huge stone). And then, v 3, they find that there is no body—it has gone!
2. They are frightened (v 5) and bow down, presumably to show that they respect these terrifying men in clothes that are as bright as lightning, and that they would quite like not to be hurt!
3. That their whole trip is based on a wrong idea: they have gone to look for a dead man, but this tomb is a place of life, not death.
That Jesus isn’t in the tomb because he has risen.
4. Because Jesus had told them this would happen (see, for instance, 9 v 22)! They should have been expecting it!
5. Presumably they didn’t really believe that Jesus was really going to be able to come back to life from the dead.
6. The women tell the disciples everything they’ve seen and heard (v 9), but they don’t believe them—it seems like nonsense (v 11).
8. Perhaps he wants to check the women have made a mistake. Or perhaps he’s just begun to believe that Jesus has risen, and wants to check the evidence.
9. Because of what he’s seen. He is beginning to realise that Jesus has risen from the dead—that the women were right, that the resurrection is real.

Between this session and the next time you meet up, turn back to page 50 in the booklets, and each work through the “Where you’re at now” section on your own.

SESSION TWENTY-THREE: What's the evidence that Jesus is alive? *Luke 24 v 13-35*
Quick, Slower and Full Route

1. Verses 19-21: They thought Jesus was a prophet (v 19), and, more than that, that he was the one who was going to redeem (ie: free) Israel (v 21). They had hoped he was the one all God's promises had been pointing to—but in the end he'd been sentenced to death and executed (v 21). All their dreams had come crashing down.

2. Because if Jesus is dead, then he isn't God's eternal Son and King, and we can't believe what he said as true. Have a look at 1 Corinthians 15 v 17-19, where Paul (one of Jesus' earliest followers) gives a great summary of how Christianity falls apart if Jesus isn't alive!

3. The women went to the tomb and didn't find the body; they said some angels had told them Jesus was alive; their friends had gone to the tomb and found it as the women described, with no Jesus.

Presumably they are still disappointed because they don't believe the women: they don't think Jesus really has risen. The evidence isn't enough to convince them (though it should have been!).

5. The Bible! He explains to them how the Scriptures (ie: the Old Testament) talk about Jesus (v 27), and how they explain that he had to suffer death and then enter his glory by rising again (v 26). "Moses" refers to the first five books of the Bible, which tradition says he wrote; the "prophets" refers to all the books written by (or about) the people God spoke through, the "prophets".

7. First, they are told by Jesus how the Bible points to his identity as the Christ, his death and resurrection (v 27, 32). Second, they see him break bread and share it out (v 30). The last time they would have seen him break bread was the night before he died (22 v 19—this is what Christians remember when they share the Lord's Supper), and it is this act that enables them to recognise Jesus for who he is. Third, when they see the other followers of Jesus, they discover that Jesus has also appeared to Simon (ie: Peter) (v 34).

If you're doing Session 24 together (ie: you're on the Full Route), have a look before you next meet at the "What next?" section on page 60. Hopefully, you've enjoyed looking through Luke's Gospel together, and this page helps you think about what you might want to do next.

SESSION TWENTY-FOUR: What am I to do now? *Luke 24 v 36-53*
Full Route

1. They are terrified (v 37) and “troubled” (v 38), and have “doubts” in their minds, because they think Jesus is a ghost (v 37, 39). They still can’t believe Jesus really has come back from the dead as a physical, real Jesus.

2. He stands among them (v 36)

He points out to them that he has flesh and bones, unlike a “ghost” (v 39).

He shows them his hands and feet (v 40), presumably because they still have the nail marks on them (see John 20 v 24-27).

He eats something (v 41-43).

3. It is the very opposite of what this passage says. The disciples thought Jesus was just a spirit (v 37), and He clearly thought it was crucial that they understood that He wasn’t. He said specifically He had “hands and feet ... flesh and bones” (v 39). His was a resurrected *body*—he had really come back to full life—he was present with them and no longer in the tomb (see v 2-3).

5. That it points to him and what he would do (v 44); and that it foretells that as God’s promised king—the Christ—Jesus will suffer (and die), and then rise (v 46). Verse 47 adds that the Old Testament also says that after the Christ suffers and rises, the message that “in his name” (ie: through knowing him) people who turn to him can have their sins forgiven will be told to all peoples.

6. A follower of Christ should read the Old Testament expecting it to tell them about Christ—about who he is and why he came.

7. The message that anyone who turns to Jesus can be forgiven will be told to everyone beginning in Jerusalem (where they were) (v 47); and it will begin being told to everyone by the people who have seen Jesus suffer and rise (v 48).

8. The heart of the Christian message is that the Christ has died (“suffered”) and risen on the third day (proving his identity and the truth of his message) (v 46), and so now anyone who turns back to him as their God and King can be forgiven for rejecting him as their King in the past (v 47). And the Christian message is for absolutely anyone (“all nations”, v 47). Everyone needs to repent and be forgiven, and anyone can repent and be forgiven.

9. From this passage, the Holy Spirit gives Jesus’ followers “power” to tell people about him. The Holy Spirit is God himself—so as Jesus, God the Son, left his friends on earth to return to heaven (v 51), it must have been very reassuring to know that God had not left them—he would continue to live with and in them, by his Spirit. For other things the Holy Spirit does for Jesus’ followers, see Session Twelve, Question Seven.