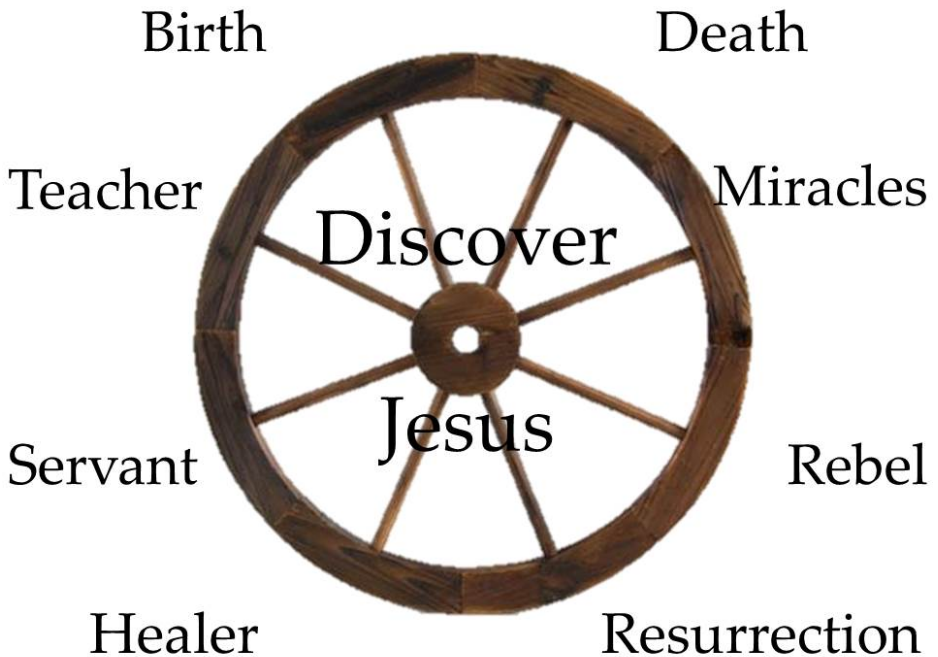


Discover Jesus

The Discipleship Wheel

Welcome to Discover Jesus, a resource to help you get to know about Jesus and what it means to follow Jesus.



Introduction

Discover Jesus, the discipleship wheel, is all about Jesus the most significant person who ever lived. Discover Jesus will help you understand what he said, what he did and who he claimed to be. Followers of Jesus or Christians believe that Jesus is as important today as he was 2,000 years ago, that his teaching is remarkably powerful, his example life-giving and that through his death and resurrection he can affect our lives today. Christ isn't Jesus' surname – it's a title meaning 'Anointed' or 'True Leader'. Discover Jesus will help you to consider whether Jesus deserves that name.

Discover Jesus is a bit like a tour. You will go to a topic, have a look around, read a little from the guide book and then take a 'selfie' – asking what does this mean for me?

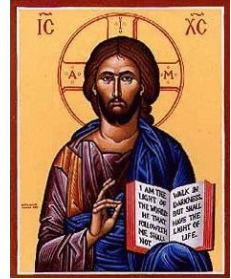
This booklet is a brief introduction, you will look at each topic very broadly, like taking a photo with a wide angle lens. At the bottom of each page will be a QR code that will take you to a website with a copy of the introduction, some more raw source material (Bible verses) and some comment (deeper reflection on the topics.) These are like multiple snapshots of Jesus. Finally, for each topic we will also point you towards some books or videos that are like a microscope, giving a really good look at the topics.

Becoming a Christian

At some point you might decide that you want to go further than just having a look around. At that point you might decide that you think Jesus was and is real. Jesus invites everyone of us to become his follower and you might get to the point where you decide you want to become a Christ follower. If you do, then Jesus will become more to you than just a teacher, he'll become a saviour and a friend. How do you become a Christian? At its simplest you just need to say "Yes" to Jesus, but to help you do that here's a prayer that you could say. *"Thank you Jesus that you love me, that you died on the cross for my sins, and that you want to be my friend. I'm Sorry for everything I've ever done wrong and I turn away from everything I know is wrong in my life. Please come into my life and be my friend and guide, teach me how to be your follower and fill me with your Spirit. Amen."*

Jesus the Teacher

Jesus is famous for what he said. He often gave talks where he summarised complicated ideas in simple ways. We can call these his sayings. Jesus also told stories that 'got under people's skin' to make them think about what they said and what they did. Let's have a look at two sayings and a story.



Saying One: *"Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil."* – **Matthew 5.37 ESV.** What a fantastic way of talking about integrity, Jesus told his followers just be honest all the time, and don't make up long vows – they only show that you are concealing something.

Saying Two: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... love your neighbour as yourself."* **Matthew 22: 37-39 ESV.** Jesus cared about making faith easy for people to grasp, so he summarised religion in two verses.

Story: Once, a man who agreed with him intellectually tried to get slippery with Jesus. A lawyer stood up to test Jesus ...*"And who is my neighbour?"* Jesus replied, *"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two coins and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?"* The lawyer said, *"The one who showed him mercy."* And Jesus said to him, *"You go, and do likewise."* **Luke 10: 29-37 ESV**

Questions:

What do you think about the sayings?

Who do you relate to in the story?

Does the story make you mad, sad or hopeful?

Is there someone you know who you could show compassion to this week?



Jesus' Birth

Jesus had an unusual birth. The Bible claims that Jesus was the Son of God. That means that God must really care about us human beings, because he became human to rescue us. It also means that human beings must have goodness and a potential for goodness deep inside our very being. If God could become one of us, then humans can be holy, good, beautiful and great. And so can you. In Genesis 1:27 the Bible tells us that human beings were '*made in the image of God*', that means a little like God, and able to have a friendship with God.



The Bible claims that Jesus was God in human form. Jesus was God with skin on. Jesus was God's messenger of love to us. *"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."* **Philippians 2:6-7 NIV**

Matthew and Luke, two of Jesus' biographers, wrote that Jesus was not conceived by a man and a woman in the normal way, but that Jesus was conceived by a miracle and was the Son of God. Don't worry if you find that hard to believe, the people who were involved found it hard to believe. In fact's Jesus' father (non-biological) was so sceptical that he needed to have the idea confirmed by an angel before he believed. *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed <like engaged> to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel'" < God with us>.* **Matthew 1: 18-23 ESV**



Questions

- What does it mean to you if Jesus really was the Son of God?
- What do you think that means about Jesus?
- What would that mean about human potential to be good?

Jesus' Death

Although we don't talk about it, most of us struggle with forgiveness. We either have someone in our past that we can't forgive or something that we have done that we want forgiveness for. Or perhaps we struggle to forgive ourselves. Forgiveness is not about saying something that was wrong, is now alright. It's not about minimising the effect of something that was wrong. It is about letting go of the desire for revenge.



The Bible talks a lot about forgiveness, and the sins or offences that require forgiveness. It makes a remarkable claim, that Jesus died so that we can be forgiven. *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.* **John 3.16 NIV**

Jesus was about 33 when He was crucified, hung on a cross to die. The Jewish leaders of the time felt Jesus was a threat, and they got the Roman Governor Pontius Pilate to order Jesus' crucifixion. But the Bible claims that Jesus' death was not any ordinary death, that Jesus' physical death marked a spiritual sacrifice that creates a spiritual benefit for us. The prophet Isaiah foretold that Jesus would be, *“pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.”* **Isaiah 53.5 NIV**

The Bible claims that Jesus' died for our sins. That Jesus' death was a death for us. Sins are everything we have ever done wrong, but sin is bigger than that also, it is the brokenness in creation. Jesus' death is described as paying the penalty for our sins and taking away the pollution of our sins. Jesus experienced the separation that our sins cause, so that we can be re-united with God. Paul describes it like this, *“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God”.* **2 Corinthians 5.21 NIV.**



Questions:

What do you think about the idea that Jesus died so that you can be forgiven? How do you feel about Jesus' offer to forgive you? If Jesus' death can also help us to forgive other people, would you like to be free of the things that you find hard to forgive?

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Jesus the Servant

One of the most astonishing things about Jesus and the Christian faith is this idea that Jesus came as a servant. When Jesus talks about his death, he talks about serving people by his death. But there are several other ways Jesus talks about being a servant. Firstly by how he comes, “coming in the form of a servant”, second of all by his actions, healing and caring for people, and then by dying in our place.



“Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” **Mark 10. 42-45 NIV**

Jesus saw his whole ministry on earth as a ministry of serving, how amazing is that – Jesus is God in human form and he serves us! Surely we are meant to serve God, but the great truth of the Christian faith is that God serves us. God loves us. God believes in us before we believe in him.

“So he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. ‘Do you understand what I have done for you?’ he asked them. ‘You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you”. **John 13. 4-5, 12-14 NIV**
Jesus applies this teaching to his disciples. He tells them to serve others.

Questions

If being a Christian means acting like a servant, what would that mean for you? Paul applies this to our work places. *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord.... It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”* **Col 3.24-25 NIV**
How could you serve people at your workplace/ school etc?



Jesus the Rebel

Jesus was also a rebel, not a rebel against God but against all half-hearted religion, especially against a sort of smug religious self-righteousness. There was a group of people in Jesus time who were very strict in their attempt to be religious, they were called Pharisees and Jesus was always giving them a hard time.



Jesus knew just how destructive it is to live an outwardly 'good' life but inside to have all the wrong motives, (jealously and greed). He was actually the one who started using the word hypocrite. The word was originally a name for people in the theatre who wore masks, and Jesus started describing people who were outwardly religious but inwardly corrupt as 'hypocrites'. He said, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness."* **Matthew 23:27 NIV**

Jesus was particularly concerned with actually helping people rather than condemning people. Often people who are self-righteous like to put other people down to make themselves feel better. Jesus was horrified by that sort of behaviour. *"Do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them. "Everything they do is done for people to see."* **Matthew 23:3-5 NIV**

Jesus respected his Jewish background and the laws and morality that came with it, but he often put people first in a way that showed his deep understanding of true morality which is to help people. *"Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, 'Stand up in front of everyone.' Then Jesus asked them, 'Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?' But they remained silent. He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot ... how they might kill Jesus".* **Mark 3:3-6 NIV**



Questions

Have you ever had an encounter with someone who was self-righteous?

What do you think of the idea of Jesus as a rebel?

Would you like to be a rebel like Jesus?

Jesus the Healer



Jesus spent a lot of his time on earth going around healing people. There are heaps of stories of Jesus' healings. He healed people who were blind, people who couldn't walk, people with leprosy and people who were spiritually oppressed. Jesus' healings were not just about helping people, they were also pointing towards the fact that God was wanting to restore all the broken things in our lives and our world.

In one of these stories Jesus didn't manage to fully heal a person the first time, so he kept on trying. *"They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, 'Do you see anything?' He looked up and said, 'I see people; they look like trees walking around.' Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly."* **Mark 8: 22-25 NIV**

Notice how Jesus took the man away somewhere quiet to heal him.

A second story tells how Jesus would touch people who were considered untouchable. *"When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, 'Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.' Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'"* **Matthew 8: 1-4 NIV** Notice how Jesus told the man to go and see the priest. In his day the priest was in charge of infection control. Jesus was telling the man to go and get checked out – like sending him to the doctor to have the healing confirmed.

Questions

Have you ever heard of someone having a miraculous healing?
It was often said of Jesus that he looked on people with compassion. Would you like to feel the compassion of Jesus?
Do you have something in your life that needs healing?



Jesus the Miracle Worker

Jesus did extraordinary things. He was famous because of his miracles. But his miracles were not performed to show off, in fact he specifically rejected performing miracles to show off, he performed miracles to show who he was and what his mission was.



For example Jesus is recorded as showing that he stilled a storm. This is important as it shows that he had power over nature, something that was often a claim for other 'gods' and something that Moses had been able to do. Jesus wanted to show his followers that he was the 'prophet like Moses' that had been foretold. *"Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown!' He replied, 'You of little faith, why are you so afraid?'* Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. *The men were amazed and asked, 'What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!'"* **Matthew 8: 24-27 NIV** Jesus demonstrated that he has the power to direct nature.

"When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.' Jesus replied, 'They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.' 'We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,' they answered. 'Bring them here to me,' he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children." **Matthew 14: 14-21 NIV**



Questions:

What do you make of the idea of miracles, do they help you believe or are they too fanciful for you?

Why do you think Jesus performed miracles? (including healings) Do you need a miracle?

Jesus' Resurrection



What happens after you die? Everyone must have wondered about that sometime? Is there a heaven? (Is there a hell.) Do we just stop existing or is our 'spirit' absorbed back into the great spirit? Christianity gives an answer to these questions. Christians believe that Jesus Christ came back from the dead in a different sort of body and announced that God has a plan for us after death.

Jesus said that if we follow him, he will take us to be with him after we die. *"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die;'"* **John 11:25 NIV**

Jesus said this after raising his friend Lazarus from the dead. Jesus brought Lazarus back to normal life. When the Bible talks about Jesus' resurrection, it is talking about something more than that, life after death. When Jesus came back from the dead his body was somehow different, a new form of life. After she found his tomb to be mysteriously empty Jesus said to Mary (his friend) *"Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father."* **John 20:17 NIV** Mark says. *"Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country."* **Mark 16:12. NIV** Paul makes a list of resurrection appearances and describes a resurrection body, *"he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time... it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."* **1 Corinthians 15: 6, 44 NIV**

When the stories started to circulate after Jesus had been crucified, that Jesus was alive again people were amazed. At first Jesus disciples didn't believe in the resurrection. *"But Thomas, one of the twelve..., he said to them, 'Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe'... Then Jesus said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe'"* Thomas said to him, *'My Lord and my God!'"* **John 20: 24-25, 27-28 NIV**



Questions:

If Jesus did rise from the dead, does that prove he is the Son of God?

Does that help his claim to be able to forgive our sins?

Does that then mean he can offer us eternal life?