

- 6 *Psalm 14*  
“The fool says in his heart ‘there is no God’.”  
How can we reach friends and family who profess no faith with the good news of Jesus, especially when they are hostile to anything that smacks of religion?
- 7 *Ruth 1-4*  
What does the story of Ruth show us about the nature of God, and the way in which the Law and the Spirit work together (which is a major theme, of course, in *Romans*)? Did you notice too any parallels in the book with the life of Jesus?
- 8 *Ruth 1-4*  
What lessons can we learn from this lovely short story regarding the way we might try to lead our *own* lives?
- 9 *Psalm 22*  
Had you ever read this psalm before?  
What links did you notice between David’s words in the psalm and Jesus’ crucifixion?  
Were you surprised by this?
- 10 *Psalm 23*  
Have you tried to memorise this psalm yet?  
Which image in the psalm resonates with you the most?

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 4

### Closing

*Light a candle, silently watch the flame flicker, reflect on the discussion you have had, and pray for God’s help in addressing any specific matters that have arisen for you personally.*

*After a few minutes, we end by saying together the Grace.*

## Opening Prayer

O Lord,  
you have given us your word  
for a light to shine upon our path;  
inspire us to meditate on that word  
and to follow its teaching,  
that we find in it the light that shines more and more  
until the perfect day;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

*(a prayer of St. Jerome, c.347 - 420)*

## Catching Up!

Some of you may be struggling to keep up-to-date. Please don't worry. SACRED is meant to inspire you not get you down! So if you *have* fallen behind in Month 4, try these three, short catch-up sessions: you can return to the detail when you have time to spare.

session 1: read the notes (only) on the whole of *Romans*.  
session 2: read the book of *Ruth* (and the notes).  
session 3: read *Psalms 22* and *Psalms 23* (and the notes).

Meanwhile, start off on track with Month 5.

## General Question

1 What has stood out for you in this month's readings?

## Activity

Have available a selection of mirrors. Each spend a few moments looking at your face in one of them (possibly with some quiet background music playing). Reflect on how you see yourself. Reflect too on how you think God sees you, especially in the light of Paul's descriptions in *Romans* of all God has willingly done for us.

## Further Ideas

*As usual, you shouldn't aim to go through all these questions but to spend time on just a few of them as you see fit.*

- 1 *Romans 2-3*  
Central to Paul's arguments in this letter is that all of us are sinful (e.g. 3:23) and so are in desperate need of God's forgiveness. However, we usually like to think of ourselves as being generally quite 'good' people.  
How do we reconcile these conflicting viewpoints?
- 2 *Romans 4*  
I mentioned in the notes that 'the message of Jesus was quite clear: salvation was for all people, for the Gentiles as well as the Jews.' What evidence can you recall that supports this view from your study of Jesus' words and actions in *Mark*?
- 3 *Romans 8*  
The Christian life is meant to be 'life in the Spirit' – something refreshing, liberating and sustaining.  
Is this your own experience? Have there been times when you've felt especially filled with God's Spirit?  
How could such times become more frequent?
- 4 *Romans 10*  
Being justified - that is, being completely accepted and restored by God – is, according to Paul, by faith alone.  
This can be difficult for us to accept. We feel that we need to do something to deserve God's approval, to earn it.  
Is this a teaching that you struggle with yourself?
- 5 *Romans 12*  
Paul lists here seven spiritual gifts (vv.6-8) with advice how to use them. They're not an exhaustive list (other gifts are mentioned elsewhere) but do any of the seven apply to you?