

- 6 *Luke 12*
Jesus encourages us to be extravagant in generosity, mirroring God's own deep desire to give (*Psalms 36*). The 'sinful' woman of chapter 7 was very generous. So was Zacchaeus (*ch. 19*). For the rich young ruler (*ch. 18*) this was a huge barrier. How about you? What is your attitude to Christian giving and generosity?
- 7 *Luke 15*
In the parable of the prodigal son, do you find yourself identifying more with the father, the younger son or the elder brother? Or all three? Or even maybe with some other character in the story? Can you take some time to share why this is?
- 8 *Luke 18*
Jesus had a clear, committed pattern of prayer? What about you? What is your pattern of prayer like?
- 9 *Luke 23*
As with the nativity stories, the details of Jesus' trial, crucifixion and death are very familiar to us. What struck you afresh, though, as you read them this time?
- 10 *Luke 24*
What is the evidence in this chapter that Jesus had a physical resurrection? Do you believe that, one day, you too will have a physical resurrection?

SACRED

Group Resources

Month 9

Closing

Light a candle, silently watch the flame flicker and reflect for a while on the discussion you've had.

After a few minutes, we'll close by saying the Lord's Prayer.

Opening Prayer

My God,
I pray that I may so know you and love you
that I may rejoice in you.
And if I may not do so fully in this life, let me go steadily on
to the day when I come to fullness of life.
Meanwhile let my mind meditate on your eternal goodness,
let my tongue speak of it, let my heart live it,
let my mouth speak it, let my soul hunger for it,
and my whole being desire it, until I enter into your joy.
Amen.

(St. Anselm, 1033-1109)

General Questions

- 1 After nine months, what kind of pattern of reading have you settled into? Has it become a natural part of your life or is it still a struggle to 'fit it in'?

So far, many of the books we've been reading have been 'narrative books' – when we turn to the prophet Jeremiah next month we'll find a very different less 'story-based' style of writing, and it will be important to maintain our discipline.

- 2 Overall, how has this month's SACRED been for you?

Activity

Arrange for there to be a few 'Nativity' sets in the room – ideally including a variety of styles from that a young child might have with 'chunky' child-friendly figures, to a more intricately carved set. Allow the 'child' in you to play with the set, holding the figures and re-arranging them in the stable.
Share with one another your thoughts and feelings as you do so.

Further Ideas

The gospels are a huge source of spiritual inspiration and challenge, so there are plenty of discussion ideas to choose from this month. As usual, though, please just spend time on a few of them as seems best.

- 1 *Psalm 31 (& 35)*
The spiritual life often seems to be a cycle of 'ups' and 'downs'. Why is this? How do you cope with it?
- 2 *Psalm 34*
"Taste and see that the Lord is good." How can we encourage people who are not Christians to do this?
What might need to change in our church to facilitate it?
- 3 *Luke 2*
The nativity. Following on from the activity opposite, did anything strike you afresh as you read these stories that are so familiar – Jesus' annunciation, his birth, the shepherds, the presentation at the Temple?

Do you find it difficult to make the connection between Jesus as a baby and Jesus as a grown man?
- 4 *Luke 5 (and elsewhere)*
'Joy' is a recurring theme in Luke's gospel.
The *Miracle Maker* depiction of the miraculous catch of fish has Jesus and Peter laughing out loud. How about you? Does the Christian life feel 'joyful' to you, or is it a 'hard slog'?

Is there a place for more laughter in our churches?
- 5 *Luke 10*
The experiment on the parable of the Good Samaritan
Discovered how hurry blinds us. Did this surprise you?
What does it teach us about how we care for one another?