

7 *Matthew 22*  
Jesus portrays ‘hell’ as a place where there is “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v.13). He uses the same language five times elsewhere in Matthew.

What do you picture when he says this?  
Do you believe there *is* a ‘hell’?

8 *Matthew 25*  
Remind yourselves what Jesus is saying in his parable of the sheep and the goats? How are we to meant to interpret it?  
Does it mean we are ‘saved’ by faith or by works? Or both?

9 *Matthew 27*  
What details stood out for you as you read again Matthew’s account of Jesus’ trial, torture and crucifixion?  
What emotions does it stir in you?

Does the account of Jesus’ willing sacrifice for our sins shed light on the ‘unfairness’ of God’s grace evident (arguably) in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard (20:1-16).

10 *Matthew 28*  
“He is not here,” says the angel to the women, “he has risen” (v.6). Our familiarity with the resurrection story can make us forget what an astounding claim this is.  
If you’d been present in Jerusalem at the time of these events, do you think that you would have believed it?  
Do you believe it now?

### **Closing**

*Be still, reflecting on what your reading and the discussion has taught you about the person of Jesus.  
After a while, close by saying together the Grace.*

# SACRED

## Group Resources

## Month 25

## Opening Prayer

Keep us, O Lord, while we tarry on this earth,  
in a serious seeking after thee,  
and in an affectionate walking with thee, every day of our lives;  
that when thou comest,  
we may be found not hiding our talent, nor serving the flesh,  
nor yet asleep with our lamp unfurnished,  
but waiting and longing for our Lord,  
our glorious King, for ever and ever.

Amen

*(Richard Baxter, 1615-91)*

## General Questions

- 1 Did you enjoy returning again to the story of Jesus?  
Was there anything new about Jesus that surprised you as you read through the gospel?
- 2 Jesus is called by many different names – Christ, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Saviour, Immanuel, Son of God, Son of Man, Lord, God’s servant, Carpenter’s son, Prophet, Teacher, Rabbi, King.  
Are any of these names a struggle for you to accept?  
So, who do *you* say Jesus is?

## Activity

Try to obtain an image of the atmospheric 1647 Rembrandt painting *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, on display in the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin. It relates to the episode in chapter 2 (vv.13-18).

Spend some time quietly contemplating the image.

What do you notice?

What does the painting tell us about the Son of God?

## Further Ideas

*Select just some of these as the members of the group decide.*

- 1 *Matthew 1-2*  
How do the nativity stories in *Matthew* demonstrate who Jesus is and what he came to do?
- 2 *Matthew 6*  
In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus talks about ‘when’ we give (v.2) and pray (v.5) and fast (v.16), not ‘if’ we do these things. But *do* we do them?  
How do you protect your own private prayer times?
- 3 *Matthew 10*  
As they go out on mission, Jesus tells his disciples to expect opposition. Is this still true of evangelism today?  
What do you think are the ‘forces’ that oppose the ministry and mission of your own local church?
- 4 *Matthew 13*  
In what way do you see the kingdom of heaven as being like “treasure” or a pearl of great value (vv.44-46)?  
Would *you* give everything to gain it?
- 5 *Matthew 17*  
Re-read the healing miracle concerning a boy with a demon (vv.14-23). What happened in the story?  
What does it reveal to us about Jesus? And about ourselves?
- 6 *Matthew 18*  
The parable of the unmerciful servant (vv.21-35).  
Can you recall a time you’ve been forgiven for something you’d done wrong? How did it feel?  
Should Jesus’ words here lead us to being more circumspect, before judging others (see also 7:1-5) and more gracious?