



SESSION 10: DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?



Aim

To explore beliefs on whether all religions lead to God and to consider the unique claim of Christianity and whether it is desirable.



Starter

You will need four sheets of A4 paper, two pairs of scissors and the sets of instructions on page 4.

Ask for four volunteers to complete a challenge. Tell them you will explain the aim of the challenge and then give each person a different set of instructions about how to complete it.

The challenge is to make a hole in the A4 paper which is big enough for them to get themselves through. Give each volunteer one of the four sets of instructions and give scissors to those with the third and fourth sets. Set a timer for three minutes and start. (Note: If you think the fourth set of instructions is too complicated, practise and deliver it yourself.)

When the activity is finished, only one set of instructions should have proved successful – even though all four claimed they would work.

In this session we will explore whether this is also the case with different religions.



Video

Watch the video [Do All Religions Lead to God?](#) (Running time 3:40)



Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



Exploring the Bible

Discuss

In the opening activity all four sets of instructions claimed to lead to success, but they did not. We can think that world religions are the same, and that they all claim to bring us to God. However, in the video, Andy Bannister said that not all religions even claim to

lead to an eternity with God. Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam do not offer a future with God. **How surprising did you find this?**

Andy Bannister quoted Oscar Wilde, 'The greatest tragedy of a person's life is ... when they are bored of pleasure.' **How much do you agree with Andy that an everlasting party would get boring?**

Explore what the end goal of Christianity is with this next look at Mark's biography.

Read Mark 12:28-34

Jesus urges the man to love God above everything else, and the man replies that there is no other God but him. Requiring the whole human race to love him might make Jesus sound egotistical, needing people's adoration to function. If he were an evil dictator that would certainly be true. What if instead, he is completely good and pure, determined to act for our good, and that loving him makes us happier than anything else?

Discuss

From what you have heard about Jesus already in Mark's biography, do you think he is interested in our good or just self-interested in having people worship him?

It may be helpful to remind the group of some of the accounts of Jesus they have already looked at in this series.

What do you think of Jesus' claim that there is only one God?

Allow the group to express their opinions freely. They may think it is very arrogant of Jesus and Christians to claim there is only one God. Thank them for contributing.

OPTIONAL QUESTION 1:

Does it make a difference that Andy said in the video other religions do not claim to have a god who wants to be with people? Would it be acceptable then for Jesus to claim there is only one God who does?

OPTIONAL QUESTION 2:

Does it make sense for all religions to lead to God? If that were true, why are the gods they talk about so different?



Reflection

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to reflect quietly or discuss the following:

- ◆ If you do not believe in a god, what god do you not believe in and why?
- ◆ If you believe in a god, what is that god like and what does he say about how you can know him? How does that god compare with Jesus?
- ◆ What more would you like to know about the God of Christianity?

For an active reflection, give each person the reflection sheet on page 5. Invite them to cut out the verses about God they would like to take away. Either give them an envelope to put these in, or a small piece of card and glue sticks to make a reflection card they can take away.



Further resources

Do All Religions Lead to God? A video of a one-hour webinar that Andy Bannister participated in on this title

Why Believe That Jesus Is the Only Way? An article from bethinking.org

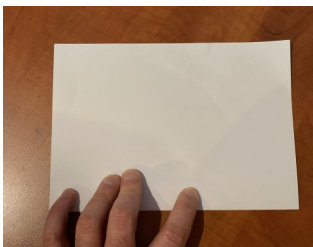
Starter Activity

How to make a hole in A4 paper big enough to walk through

Instruction 1 Place the paper in front of you. Now imagine yourself being able to cut a hole in it which you can walk through. Keep imagining throughout the time! Don't touch the paper. If you imagine hard enough, the hole will appear!

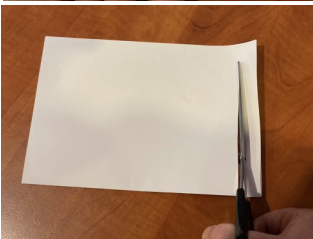
Instruction 2 Place the paper in front of you. Talk to it, demanding that it produce a hole in itself big enough to walk through. If you want to, try waving your hands over the paper. Do not touch it. If you plead with it hard enough, the hole will appear!

Instruction 3 Try anything you can think of to make a hole big enough to walk through. You can rip or cut the paper. You could try suggesting a smaller classmate has to walk through it. If you work hard enough, the hole will appear!



Instruction 4 *

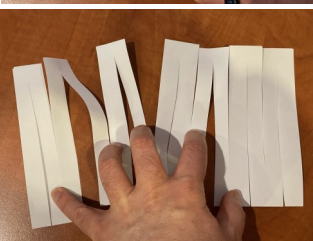
Fold a piece of paper in half like a book. Put the paper on the table with folded side closest to you.



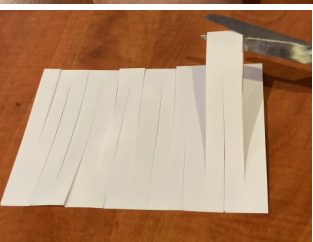
Cut into the folded side, about 1 cm from the left hand edge, and start cutting straight towards the far side of the paper. Stop cutting about 1 cm before the opposite edge, so you don't cut all the way across the paper.



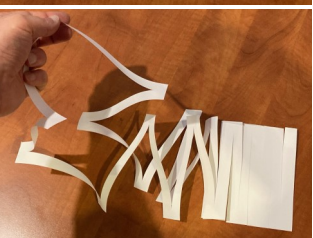
Turn the paper around so the fold is away from you. Cut in around 1 cm from the last cut, and stop about 1 cm before you get to the folded side.



Alternate between cutting from the folded side, and the side opposite. Keep your cuts 1 cm apart, and always stop cutting 1 cm before you get to the far side of the paper. When you have finished, you should have a zig-zag of paper.



Look along the folded side of the paper. You should have a series of loops of paper. Cut along the fold of each of the loops EXCEPT the first loop and the last loop. Leave these intact.



Carefully pull the paper apart, being careful not to tear it. You should have a large loop. Now try to fit yourself through the loop!

Reflection

Cut out the verses you like most about God's desire to know us and what life with him is like.

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest'

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

'The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them'

John 14:21 (NIV)

I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

Psalms 121:1-2 (NIV)

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you

Ezekiel 36:26 (NIV)

When I said, "My foot is slipping," your unfailing love, LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy.

Psalms 94:18-19 (NIV)

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:3-4 (NIV)

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Deuteronomy 31:8 (NIV)

My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.

John 14:2-3 (NIV)

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17 (NIV)