

## Prayer and Collect

Spend some time in prayer together, thanking God for your 'fives' and the ways God is already at work in their lives. And pray for one another, that God would give you opportunities to speak about him and courage when those opportunities come along. You can pray out loud or in silence, as you prefer.

**Lord Jesus,**  
**you send us out into your world**  
**to be your witnesses**  
**in the things we say and do.**  
**Grant us the help of the Holy Spirit**  
**that we may point people to your love,**  
**and so bring glory to you. Amen.**

## Looking Ahead

Each of us has a story, and God is part of that story. During the week ahead, think about your 'your story' and write down something of your faith journey, in such a way that you could share it with somebody else, highlighting any key moments. Have significant moments made you the person you are today? How did your faith come alive? Is there a sense of the times when your story and God's story became connected? What difference has your faith made to you? of this.

## Reflections for individuals

Readings for this week

**Monday** = **Exodus 3.7-12**  
**Tuesday** = **1 Samuel 8.1-7**  
**Wednesday** = **Psalms 137.1-6**  
**Thursday** = **Isaiah 42.1-4**  
**Friday** = **Matthew 3.13-17**

# EVERYDAY WITNESS

# 1

## 1: The Story of God

### Course Introduction *(read aloud)*

*In this course, we are going to embark on a journey together to learn how we can be witnesses. The structure is inspired by the 'Couch to 5k' fitness model, which has become very popular. The genius of 'Couch to 5k' is that it recognises the only way for non-runners to become runners is to **run!** No amount of inspiring books or motivational videos will make someone a runner. It is beginning to run, starting with the tiniest distance, that make someone a runner. 'Couch to 5k' is practicable and active from the very beginning. The approach is one borrowed for this course. From the beginning, we won't just think about being witnesses to Christ. We will begin to put into action what we have learned. We will do it gently; we will do it together; and we will do it with the Holy Spirit as our helper.*

### Icebreaker

In your work or hobbies what things do you make? Do your creations ever go wrong, and if so how?

OR

Can you think of any resolutions you made or activities you started, but that you've gave up really quickly?

### Collect

**Lord Jesus,**  
**you send us out into your world**  
**to be your witnesses**  
**in the things we say and do.**  
**Grant us the help of the Holy Spirit**  
**that we may point people to your love,**  
**and so bring glory to you. Amen.**

## Introducing the theme *(read aloud)*

Most people who attend church regularly probably know a good number of Bible stories, and even people who don't may remember some of the best-known ones from school. But behind all those individual stories, there is a **big story** that runs like a thread through the Bible. It's the story of a good and loving God who creates a beautiful world, and of creatures made in God's image who then go their own way and corrupt themselves and God's creation. God calls a people to know him in a special way, with the aim of blessing the whole world. In time, he liberates those people from slavery, leading them to a land of their own. Sadly, the pattern established at the very beginning, of turning away from God, continues. The people insist on a king because they want to be like other nations and, when it all goes wrong, they end up in captivity again. This time, there is no dramatic moment of rescue, but a promise that a Saviour will come to make things right.

When Jesus appears on the scene, some people recognise him as God's Saviour, even though he doesn't seem to fit a lot of common expectations about that special person. Jesus is crucified and most conclude that this is the end of the story. Instead it turns out to be just the beginning. Jesus is raised to life again and returns to heaven, sending and equipping his followers to represent him in the world. Those who believe in him continue to trust that, one day, Jesus will return and all will be made right.

The first chapter of Genesis gives us the first part of the story. They contain good news and bad news, and identify the problem that the rest of the Christian story seeks to address. God creates, with tenderness, love and unbridled imagination, and a universe comes together that is full of wonder and possibility. The pinnacle of this cosmos-making is the creation of humanity, designed to reflect the image of the creator in a unique way and charged with joining God in the co-creation of gardens, cities and culture.

Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. One of the earliest acts of the human race is to decide that we have a better way of doing things than God's way, and the consequences are severe. Sickness, sin and isolation enter into the created order, and our relationships with God and with one another are torn.

Thankfully, this is not the end, but it sets us up for all that is going to

happen as the story unfolds.

## Reading

Genesis 1:1-5, Genesis 1.26-31 and Genesis 3.1-7  
*(optional: read all of Genesis chapters 1 and 3)*

## Discussion

- 1 What are some examples of what is good about God's creation?
- 2 What are some of the things that are wrong with our world today?
- 3 Where does this picture of a wonderful creation gone wrong resonate with your experience of the world around you?
- 4 How important is it for something to happen to make things right?

## Activity

During this week, we have been invited to think about the people around us and to choose 5 whom we can pray for regularly, trusting that they might come to faith in Christ. If you feel comfortable, share with others in the group about whom you are praying for. Without disclosing anything sensitive or confidential, tell the others a little bit about them and where you think they might be in terms of openness to faith. What opportunities do you think there might be to talk to them about your own faith?

*It might be sensible to agree a time limit, say 3 minutes each, and appoint someone to signal when there are 3 minutes left. Or you might do this in smaller groups of 3 or 4.*

When everyone who wishes to speak has done so, talk about how you feel about sharing your faith with your 5 others. What would stop you or make it difficult for you? Can you think of some ways of beginning that conversation?