

CHILDREN
HEARING
THE VOICE OF
GOD



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DAVID SYKES

These sessions are
for Christian
children who want
to follow God and
have a close
relationship with
Him.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

This manual is the culmination of nearly 40 years experience in Children's Ministry. Children have an amazing, unquestioning faith and it is an incredible privilege to witness the way God speaks to them and uses them.

I could not write these sessions without shedding a tear from time to time. I have so many great memories of children hearing from God and I love the way children get excited about the things of God as they draw closer to him.

There is often a strong presence of God as the children open up their hearts to hear Him speak. God can use children to speak into each other's lives and the lives of adults too. What they can achieve when they know how to hear the voice of the Father is limitless.

Anyone who cares deeply for the spiritual health of the children in their care will find these sessions to be of great value. You will see the children's passion for God increase incredibly.

Let your faith rise!

David Sykes

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 'Children Hearing the Voice of God' sessions.

The purpose of these sessions is to introduce children to the wonderful world of relationship with God through hearing his voice and sensing his presence.

SESSION TIMES

These sessions are designed to run for around 40 - 45 minutes each.

They can run with up to 20 children with one leader or with the main leader out front and a number of leaders in charge of small groups.

An option can be to run these sessions as a small group for interested children in a suitable place such as someone's home.

BIBLES

The Scriptures used in these sessions are from the New International 'Young Readers' Version (Nlrv). If the children have other versions it is good to have them read them out and then you can read the Nlrv version if you think it makes things clearer.

Children need to bring their Bibles because they will be using them a lot. However, you may decide to read some verses to them rather than have them look them all up.

There are times when the children will discuss specific verses in groups. If there are not enough verses to share around each group give the same verse to more than one group.

DISPLAYING ANSWERS

When 'display their answers' or similar is required use whatever method you have chosen such as whiteboard or data projector via computer. If there are just a few children in a house setting or similar you may decide not to display answers.

BE GENTLE

Remember to be very gentle with the children as this may be the first step some have taken. There may be children who will be very reluctant to keep going if they feel any pressure.

MEMORY WORK

Add a further 5 – 10 minutes if you decide to teach the memory verse during the session. A suggestion would be to offer a great reward to any of the children who can recite all 7 memory verses at the start of session 8.

OTHER

Be careful not to add too much extra material into these sessions as they are already quite intense.

If there is time, a few songs would be a good way to start the sessions. Songs that focus on worshipping God.

Words in blue are leader's instructions.

Some Scriptures are repeated, particularly when they apply to multiple subjects.

To receive your download for pages that need printing email david@davidsykes.com.au

ITEMS REQUIRED:

- An exercise book for each small group for activities
- A whiteboard or other method to display answers
- Paper and coloured pencils for session 2
- Blue and red cardboard squares for session 7

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John 10:27
My sheep listen
to my voice.
I know them,
and they follow
me.

SESSION ONE

UNDERSTANDING THE VOICE OF GOD

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

How does God speak to us?

Staying close to God

The gentle voice of God

Why does God speak to us and through us?

What sort of people hear God's voice?

Why doesn't God show himself to us?

God desires to be a friend to us

DOING

Listening for a word from God

PREPARATION

Decide how you want to set the room up. A circle of chairs is recommended if there are not a lot of children.

Print off the scriptures from page 14 (as supplied via email download) to be handed out to the small groups.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time bringing the story of God speaking to Moses alive.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

GETTING STARTED

Welcome the children to the Hearing the Voice of God series.

HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

Ask the children to think of ways God speaks to us.
Interact with their responses.

Four of the most common ways are through:

- the Holy Spirit
- the Bible
- people
- circumstances

God often uses the Holy Spirit to speak to us. The Holy Spirit is here to help us get closer to God and to teach us all sorts of wonderful things.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth.

STAYING CLOSE TO GOD

Ask the children if they think they would be able to hear someone talking to them from another country. Then ask them if they would be able to hear if the person was on the other side of our country. What about the other side of town? A street away? Outside this room? On the other side of this room? Standing right next to you?

Explain that the closer we are to the person, the easier it is to hear what they are saying.

God does not often speak loudly to us so we need to stay close to him with our hearts and minds so we can hear what he is saying.

THE GENTLE VOICE OF GOD

Tell the story about God speaking to Elijah on the mountain. When you are preparing, read around the following verses to get the sense of what was going on.

1 Kings 19:11-13 The Lord said: 'Go out. Stand on the mountain in front of me. I am going to pass by.' As the Lord approached, a very powerful wind tore the mountains apart. It broke up the rocks. But the Lord wasn't in the wind. After the wind there was

an earthquake. But the Lord wasn't in the earthquake. After the earthquake a fire came. But the Lord wasn't in the fire. And after the fire there was only a **gentle whisper**. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his coat over his face. He went out and stood at the entrance to the cave. Then a voice said to him, 'Elijah, what are you doing here?'

Explain the setting and make sure the children understand how dramatic the scene was.

Explain how God was showing Elijah that he does not usually speak in a booming voice. He usually speaks so quietly that we would miss his voice if we weren't listening.

Hearing God's voice is rarely something we do with our ears. It is more a sensing inside us. It would be so easy if God just spoke out loud to us every time. Knowing when God is speaking to us mostly comes from developing a close relationship with him.

John 10:27

My sheep listen to my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

WHY DOES GOD SPEAK TO US AND THROUGH US?

Ask the children why they think God wants to talk to us. Interact with their answers.

Break them into small groups of three to six children per group. The groups do not have to be of equal size.

Give each small group a Scripture from the following page (print from the supplied email) to look up. Ask them as a group to find out why God speaks to us according to the scripture. Have them write their answers in their group exercise book. When they are finished, have each group share their findings with everyone.

Ephesians 4:11&12 He is the One who gave some the gift to be apostles. He gave some the gift to be prophets. He gave some the gift of preaching the good news. And he gave some the gift to be pastors and teachers. He did it so that they might **prepare God's people to serve**. If they do, **the body of Christ will be built up**.

1 Corinthians 14:1,3&4 Follow the way of love. You should also want the gifts the Holy Spirit gives. Most of all, you should want the gift of prophecy. Anyone who prophesies speaks to people. He says things **to make them stronger, to give them hope and to comfort them**. Those who speak in other languages build themselves up. But those who prophesy **build up the church**.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will **guide you into all truth**.

WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE HEAR GOD'S VOICE?

Ask the children: what sort of people hear God's voice? Interact with their answers.

God speaks mostly to Christians but sometimes he speaks to people who are not Christians.

Why do you think he would talk to people who do not believe in him?

He usually talks to people who are not Christians so they will become one.

WHY DOESN'T GOD SHOW HIMSELF TO US?

If everyone could see God it would be easy to believe in him. He wants us to choose to believe in him even though we cannot see him. This is called believing by faith. When someone chooses to believe in God, God starts to show them he is real as their relationship with him grows stronger.

2 Corinthians 5:7 We live by believing (faith), not by seeing.

LISTENING FOR A WORD FROM GOD

Remind the children that most of the time we hear God 'inside ourselves'. Tell them that they are going to do an exercise to help them get started on hearing the voice of God.

Tell the children that they are about to ask God to give them just one word.

Ask them to close their eyes.

Get them to pray this prayer out loud after you.

Dear Heavenly Father. I want to learn to hear your voice so I can love you and serve you more. Please speak a word to me now. Thank you God.

As they are 'listening' remind them that it will not be a word they hear in their ears. It will be a word that comes into their mind.

Give them about a minute to hear something. Remember not to pressure them as they are only just starting out. When they are ready, ask who sensed a word from God. Listen to what they say. Encourage them whenever you can.

This helps the children who did not sense anything realise it is okay if it takes a while before they hear God speaking to them.

Repeat the exercise.

Finish by encouraging the children that have not heard anything yet. Tell them that many people, particularly adults, take a few sessions before they sense God speaking to them.

GOD DESIRES TO BE A FRIEND TO US

We want Jesus to heal us, give us things, help us, rescue us and much more. But what does Jesus want from us?

You can work really hard doing things for God but he wants our love more than anything else.

I do not call you servants anymore. Servants do not know their master's business. Instead, I have called you friends. I have told you everything I have learned from my Father (John 15:15).

It is important to realise that the greatest way we can show we love God is by obeying him. We all do things we should not do, but a true Christian wants to obey God more and more.

John 14:21 'Anyone who has my commands and obeys them loves me. My Father will love the one who loves me. I too will love him. And I will show myself to him'.

John 15:14 'You are my friends if you do what I command'.

Ask the children to pray, committing themselves to hearing his voice so they can better serve him.

HOMEWORK

Encourage the children to ask God to speak to them as they are having a quiet time maybe before going to sleep.

MEMORY VERSE

John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice. I know them and they follow me.

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or you can teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION TWO WAYS GOD SPEAKS TO US

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

Relationship

Impressions

Anyone who loves God will hear his voice

Visions

Ways the Holy Spirit uses us

Interruptions

DOING

Visions

Visions and words

Talking and listening

PREPARATION

Decide how you want to set the room up. A circle of chairs is recommended if there are not a lot of children.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

See who knows their memory verse. You might want to give them a reward to encourage other children to remember next time.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in the first session.

Ask if there are any children who sensed God speaking to them while they were having a quiet time with God or at any other time since you last met together.

Get them to share what they felt God said to them.

Ask the children how close God wants to be to us? He wants to be our friend and to have a close relationship with us.

RELATIONSHIP

Ask the children how often they think God wants to speak to them.

Most of the time God has something to say to us and sometimes he gives us a message for someone else.

God loves to share things with us. It is part of the relationship he wants to build between us and him because he loves us so much.

IMPRESSIONS

Last week we learnt that God often speaks to us by speaking quietly inside us. He bypasses our ears and goes straight to our mind. These are called Impressions. They are thoughts that come to us from the Holy Spirit.

Have the children look up the following Scriptures and discuss each one as a whole group.

Nehemiah 7:5,

So my God stirred me up to gather the people together.

Acts 14:9,

Paul looked right at him (the man who couldn't walk). He saw that the man had faith to be healed.

Mark 2:8

Right away Jesus knew what they were thinking.

ANYONE WHO LOVES GOD WILL HEAR HIS VOICE

Ask a child to look up and read Joel 2:28&29

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have dreams. Your young men will have **visions**. In those days I will pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women alike.*

Ask them who has what role according to the verses.

Explain that the Bible is telling us that all different people and ages get to experience all those things.

Explain that for now we are just learning about visions.

VISIONS

Visions are like a picture or a short movie in your mind.

Here is an example from a church in Newcastle, Australia:

'When some children were praying in a meeting a girl suddenly knelt and started to weep. At the same time the Lord gave another child a vision of the kneeling girl having chains broken from her life.'

Discuss how this vision could help the girl.

VISION EXERCISE

Have paper and coloured pencils available.

Tell the children that they are going to ask God to show them a picture of something. If they feel that God has shown them something they are welcome to draw it.

Get them to close their eyes and pray, asking God to show them something.

Allow them a few minutes to draw something.

When they are ready ask for volunteers to share what they have drawn. Ask each volunteer why they think God gave them their picture.

Quite often we have to ask God what the vision means. You or other children may help with this but do not dwell too long on the interpretations at this point.

Encourage them. The pictures may range from 'what on earth would God give them that picture for?' To, 'wow! God has really shown them something special'. Be gentle. Remember they are just starting out.

Facilitator note: Even at this early stage you may see one or more children receiving startling things from God. This is usually an indication that God is giving them a prophetic gift. Just wait and observe them over the next few sessions.

Go ahead and repeat the exercise. This will help more children gain confidence.

You may want to remind them that seeing visions and hearing from God often involves faith. In other words, we may not be sure something is from God but its okay to have a go and see what happens.

WAYS THE HOLY SPIRIT USES US.

Tell the children that God uses a number of different ways to speak to us and through us. We often call this 'prophecy'.

Give each small group one of the following Scriptures to look up and ask them to write down the ways God speaks to us or uses us from their scripture.

When they are finished, have each group share their answers.

*1 Corinthians 12:7-11, The Holy Spirit is given to each of us in a special way. That is for the good of all. To some people the Spirit gives the **message of wisdom**. To others the same Spirit gives the **message of knowledge**. To others the same Spirit gives **faith**. To others that one Spirit gives **gifts of healing**. To others he gives the **power to do miracles**. To others he gives the **ability to prophesy**. To others he gives the **ability to tell the spirits apart**. To others he gives the **ability to speak in different kinds of languages they had not known before**. And to still others he gives the **ability to explain what was said in those languages**. All of the gifts are produced by one and the same Spirit. He gives them to each person, just as he decides.*

Job 33:15&16. He might speak in a **dream** or in a **vision at night**. That's when people are sound asleep in their beds.

1 Corinthians 12:28 First, God has appointed **apostles** in the church. Second, he has appointed **prophets**. Third, he has appointed **teachers**. Then he has appointed **people who do miracles** and **those who have gifts of healing**. He also appointed **those able to help others**, **those able to direct things**, and **those who can speak in different languages** they had not known before.

Numbers 12:6 Then the Lord said. 'Listen to my words. Suppose one of my prophets is among you. I make myself known to him in **visions**. I speak to him in **dreams**.

Ephesians 4:11&12 He is the One who gave some the gift to be **apostles**. He gave some the gift to be **prophets**. He gave some the gift of **preaching the good news**. And he gave some the gift to be **pastors** and **teachers**. He did it so that they might prepare God's people to serve. If they do, the body of Christ will be built up.

INTERRUPTIONS

When God speaks to us it is often an **interruption** to what we are thinking.

For example we may be thinking or praying about someone who is not feeling well when suddenly we have the thought that they need to be reminded that God loves them.

This is an interruption to what we were praying and thinking about.

God is the only one who knows the deepest needs of each one of us and He wants us to hear His voice.

VISIONS AND WORDS EXERCISE

Explain that God often gives us more than one word when he talks to us.

Get the children to ask God to show them a picture, or give them a word or words. You may want to have the paper and pencils available again.

When they are ready, find out what they sensed the Lord was showing them or saying to them.

Facilitator note: Watch for any children who are not sharing anything. If you have someone working with you they could talk quietly to these children in turn to see if they can help. Sometimes a child is too shy to share or worried that what they sense will be rejected.

TALKING AND LISTENING EXERCISE

Have the children spend a few minutes talking to God alone. Get them to talk to him about anything that worries them. Then get them to stop praying and just listen to see what God says back to them. Ask for volunteers to share their experience.

HOMEWORK

Ask the children to spend a few minutes each night, before they go to bed, talking to God about things that are important to them. Then they should listen to see what God may say to them.

MEMORY VERSE

Joel 2:28&29

*I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will have dreams. Your young men will have **visions**. In those days I will pour out my Spirit on those who serve me, men and women alike.*

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or you can teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION THREE

LEARNING TO LISTEN

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

How to be ready to hear the voice of God
Hearing God through the Bible
The Holy Spirit reminds us of Scriptures

DOING

Listening through the Bible
Words, visions & Scriptures

PREPARATION

Make sure the room is set up.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Prepare the drama from page 37. This is a good opportunity to get other leaders involved.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

Check who knows their memory verse and reward them.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in previous sessions.

HOW TO BE READY TO HEAR THE VOICE OF GOD

WILLINGNESS

Jesus himself led by example when he said: *'I can do nothing by myself. I judge only as I hear. And my judging is fair. I do not to please myself. I try only to please him who sent me (John 5:30).'*

We need God. When we want His will only, we will be able to know God's voice with confidence. This is an important principle.

We should pray as Jesus prayed – *'I have come to do what you want' (Hebrews 10:7).'*

BY BEING AVAILABLE ANYTIME

Jesus was the best example.

Look up *Mark 1:32-34*. What do we learn about Jesus availability?

Mark 1:32-34; That evening after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who were sick. They also brought all who were controlled by demons. All the people in the town gathered at the door. Jesus healed many of them. They had all kinds of sicknesses. He also drove out many demons.

Jesus was available for God no matter what he was doing or how tired he was. He was probably up all night. Jesus did not make time for God. His time **was** God's.

We want God to be there for anything we need at any time, but are we ready to be there for anything he wants any time?

HUMILITY

In the book of Numbers we see that Moses was a very humble man.

Numbers 12:3 Moses wasn't very proud at all. In fact, he had less pride than anyone else on the face of the earth.

In verse 8 God says that: *'With Moses I speak face to face. I speak with him clearly. I do not speak in riddles. I let him see something of what I look like'*.

In other words, God was pleased with Moses because he was a humble man.

Being humble is not putting yourself down. It is about having the heart of a servant.

In *James 4:6* we see further proof that humility is important to God; *God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.*

GOD SPEAKS TO US THROUGH THE BIBLE AS WE READ IT.

The Bible is God's word to us.

DRAMA INTERRUPTION.

Have someone lined up to knock on the door. When you open the door they are to say: 'Special delivery. Please sign here.'

They hand you a letter addressed to the children. Have one of the children open it and read it out. It will be a letter from the Pastor or someone else the children respect. The letter is to encourage them to be excited about their relationship with God and passionate about hearing his voice.

Relate the letter to the Bible. Explain how the Bible is God's letter of love to us.

Look up *2 Timothy 3:16&17* *God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.*

Col 3:16a. Let Christ's word live in you like a rich treasure.

LISTENING THROUGH THE BIBLE

Have the children open their Bibles to anywhere in the New Testament. Get them to pray, asking God to show them something from his Word.

Leave them to read for a few minutes.

Ask if anyone felt God say something to them and what it was.

Tell them that we should all read our Bible each day, asking God to speak to us through the words. We should **always** read the Bible knowing God wants to teach us things.

THE HOLY SPIRIT REMINDS US OF SCRIPTURES WE KNOW WHEN WE NEED THEM

Ask for volunteers to quote verses they know or partly know. It will be interesting to find out how much scripture is known between the children.

Tell the story of Jesus temptation in the wilderness from Luke 4:1-12.

At the end, ask who in the story knew the Scriptures.

The devil did and Jesus did.

The devil misused the Bible to try and trick Jesus.

Why didn't Jesus fall for the devil's tricks?

Because he not only read the Scriptures, he had allowed his heavenly Father to teach him.

The Scriptures were not just words – they were life to him.

It needs to be the same for us.

We should always ask God to bring his word alive to us as we read it.

In conclusion – the more we read and study the Bible, the more scripture we have stored in our mind that the Holy Spirit can remind us of when we need it.

WORDS, VISIONS & SCRIPTURE EXERCISE

Form a circle and place a chair in the middle.
Choose a child to sit in the chair.

Ask the other children to seek God for something
for that child.

It can be a word or words, a vision or a scripture.

When a few children have shared something
choose a different child to sit in the chair.

After a few children have been ministered to, talk
to them about how there is something wonderful
about placing your hands on someone as you pray
for them.

When we place our hands on someone it is like
saying that you care even before you have said
anything.

Also, the power of the Holy Spirit often moves
through you and into the person you are praying
for.

*Matthew 19:13&14 Some people brought little
children to Jesus. They wanted him to place his
hands on the children and pray for them. But the
disciples told the people to stop. Jesus said, 'Let the*

little children come to me. Don't keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.' Jesus placed his hands on them.

This passage shows that the people knew that placing hands on people and praying for them was a powerful thing.

Now, if you have time, continue having children sit in the chair until everyone has been prayed for.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 119:105 Your Word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me.

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION FOUR

OBEYING WHEN GOD SPEAKS TO YOU

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

Motives

Prophecy

Getting the message right

Words of wisdom & knowledge

DOING

Chinese whispers

Prophecy

PREPARATION

Make sure the room is set up.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

Check who knows their memory verse.

Briefly remind the children of the different ways God speaks to us.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in previous sessions.

HAVING PURE MOTIVES

Ask the children what they think some good reasons to hear from God are.

Answers should include things such as:

- To help us and others.
- To teach us things.
- To encourage us.

Now discuss the following possible dangers when we are getting lots of wonderful things from God:

We could:

- Want people to think we are doing something good when it is actually God using us.
- Like the attention for our self instead of helping people look to God.
- Use 'God's voice' to say what we want to say.
- Think we are more worthy to hear God's voice than other people.

Have the children ask God to help them always have the right motives.

PROPHECY

We are looking at prophecy today.

Let's look up: *1 Corinthians 14:39*

Brothers and sisters, you should want to prophesy.

To prophesy is simply to bring a message from God. Most of the things we are doing in these sessions are prophetic.

Even the pictures we get from God are a prophetic message, just in a different form.

Let's do a fun exercise.

CHINESE WHISPERS

Choose about 5 children and tell them you are going to whisper a message to one of them while the others wait outside. Then you will ask them to come in one at a time so the first person can pass the message on. Now choose one child and send the other four outside.

Whisper the message two times to the first child:

One thin boy ate 4 bananas and slipped on one, while a tall girl ate 2 apples and laughed happily.

Ask the next child to come in and have the first child whisper the message to them.

That child then whispers to the next child and so on.

Ask the last child to tell everyone, out loud, what the message was.

Now tell them what the actual message was.

It is usually quite funny to see the difference.

Play again making up your own or use a couple of the following:

The house was strange so Silly Sally said Sam should shout songs so slippery snakes should slither silently outside.

Five friends fed fifty ferrel ferrets fried fish.

The pig snorted loudly, the rat scurried along and the dog howled all night.

GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT

When we sense we are hearing something from God we really need to hear properly so we are passing on the correct message.

That does not always happen so sometimes the message is not as accurate as we would like.

This wonderful verse from John helps us:

*John 10:27 My sheep listen to my voice.
I know them, and they follow me.*

We know that as time goes on and we get closer to God, we will get better at knowing his voice.

If you want to play soccer you have to practise and be prepared to make lots of mistakes before you become a good player. Even the good players still make mistakes. We can get better and better at knowing what is the voice of God but we are human and there will be times when we get it wrong.

Deuteronomy 18:22 Sometimes a prophet will announce something in the name of the Lord. And it won't take place or come true. Then that's a message the Lord hasn't told him to speak.

WORDS OF WISDOM & KNOWLEDGE

Words of wisdom are wise advice that comes from God.

Proverbs 25:11

The right word at the right time is like golden apples in silver jewellery.

James 1:5

If any of you need wisdom, ask God for it. He will give it to you. God gives freely to everyone. He doesn't find fault.

James 3:17

The wisdom that comes from heaven is pure. That's the most important thing about it. And that's not all. It also loves peace. It thinks about others. It obeys. It is full of mercy and good fruit. It is fair. It doesn't pretend to be what it is not.

One of the ways God uses us with words of wisdom is when we are talking to someone who needs help or advice. You may be talking and suddenly you have said something that has really helped the other person. That is a good time to thank God in your heart for giving you the words that have helped.

Words of knowledge can be quite exciting. This is usually a special gift God gives to someone. When it is needed, God tells the person something they could not possibly know about the other person or situation so that it is clear that God is there to help them or warn them.

John 1:45-48 Philip found Nathanael and told him, 'We have found the One that Moses wrote about in the Law. The prophets also wrote about him. He is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'

'Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?' Nathanael asked.

'Come and see,' said Philip. Jesus saw Nathanael approaching. Here is what Jesus said about him.

'He is a true Israelite. There is nothing false in him.'

*'How do you know me?' Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, **'I saw you while you were still under the fig tree. I saw you there before Philip called you.'***

Nathanael replied, Rabbi, you are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel.'

What were the two words of knowledge that Jesus had for Nathanael?

Why did Nathanael need the words of knowledge? (Because he doubted that the Messiah would come from an insignificant place like Nazareth.)

PROPHECY

This next exercise involves having a person sitting in the middle of a circle again.

Tell the children you are going to help them to prophesy.

Let them know they are to ask God for something to say to the child in the middle.

When they have prayed, if they feel they have something, they are to go to the person in the middle and tell them the message.

This is not a time for them to pray for the person.

Have them start by saying, 'I feel the Lord is saying.....'

Encourage whole sentences.

Repeat with different children in the middle.

Have some good discussions every now and again about how they came about the words.

Some questions you could ask are:

Did they just get one word and then sensed how to make it into a sentence?

Are they growing in confidence?

What was it like receiving those prophecies from other children?

MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 25:11

The right word at the right time is like golden apples in silver jewellery.

Ask the children why they think a right word is like 'golden apples in silver jewellery'. Make sure they understand that it means that a right word is just like something very beautiful – something to be treasured.

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION

FIVE

FELLOWSHIP

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

Relationship

Fellowship

DOING

Fellowship assignments

Holy Spirit guided time

PREPARATION

Make sure the room is set up.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Print off the assignments from the supplied email download. Assignment one is suitable for younger children.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

Bring a letter for the parents if you are going ahead with the excursion.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

Check who knows their memory verse.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in previous sessions.

RELATIONSHIP

Ask them how they are all going. Do they feel like they are becoming better friends with one another through these sessions?

Do they feel like they are getting closer to God?

Today we are going to look at fellowship and what it means.

FELLOWSHIP

Make sure they are in their groups and then give each group one of the Scripture assignments. If there are more groups, give the same assignment to more than one group. If there are not enough groups, discuss any leftover assignments with everyone.

ASSIGNMENT ONE

Use your exercise book for notes.

Acts 2:42&43. The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared life together. They broke bread and ate together. And they prayed. Everyone felt that God was near. The apostles did many wonders and miraculous signs.

Make a list of the things the believers did together.
Discuss each thing on your list, making sure you understand what they were doing.

What exciting things were happening?

Share your thoughts with the whole group.

ASSIGNMENT TWO

Use your exercise book for notes.

Look carefully at the verses below.

Discuss what they are talking about.

Share your findings with the whole group.

Maybe a different person could explain each verse.

1 Corinthians 1:9. God is faithful. He has chosen you to share life with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 John 1:3. We share life with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

1 John 1:6. Suppose we say that we share life with God but still walk in the darkness. Then we are lying, we are not living by the truth.

BUT

1 John 1:9 says: God is faithful and fair. If we admit that we have sinned, He will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.

ASSIGNMENT THREE

Use your exercise book for notes.

Read the Bible verses and talk about the different things people can bring when they get together to worship God in times of fellowship.

Can you think of anything else people might be able to bring?

Decide how you are going to share what you have discussed with the whole group.

1 Corinthians 14:26.

Brothers and sisters, what should we say then? When you come together, every one of you brings something. You bring a hymn or a teaching or a word from God. You bring a message in another language or explain what was said. All of those things must be done to make the church strong.

Ephesians 5:19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord.

HOLY SPIRIT GUIDED TIME

Ask the children how they would feel about spending twenty minutes just letting the Holy Spirit guide them in a time of fellowship.

Make a list of all the things they might be able to bring if God desires them to. The list should include things like:

- Words
- Prophecies
- Scriptures
- Speaking
- Singing
- Visions
- Praying for one another

Get them to pray, declaring to God that they want to serve him and one another in this next 20 minutes and that they need the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Remember you are an observer in this exercise.

This time can often start slowly but can be very exciting by the time the children finish!

MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 10:24 Let us consider how we can stir up one another to love. Let us help one another to do good works.

Ask the children to memorise the verse for the next session or teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Pray for unity to start now and to continue into future times of 'fellowship'.

EXCURSION

If you are able, arrange to meet with as many of the children as possible at a set day and time in the local shopping centre or some other place where there are a lot of people wandering around.

Their mission, if they choose to accept it, is to walk around in pairs and look at people (that's look, not stare). They are to ask God if he wants to say anything about any of the people. Obviously it is very important that they do not attract attention to themselves or go up to any of the people.

Arrange to meet somewhere 20 minutes later to share what happened.

Now have them find a high spot where they can see as many of the people as possible. They are to ask God what he is saying about **all** the people.

Meet again in 20 minutes and debrief at McDonald's or somewhere suitable – preferably over a thick shake or ice cream!

This can be worth the trouble of arranging as you may find some surprisingly strong emotional results. You may see evangelists, or people with empathy or intercessors suddenly give themselves away.

If that happens, let them know that they will be learning about their feelings in the next session.

SESSION SIX

GETTING CLOSER TO GOD

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

Timing
God's presence
A devotional lifestyle

DOING

Devotions
Caring for one another

PREPARATION

Make sure the room is set up.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

You will need a way of having worship music during this session.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

Check who knows their memory verse.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in previous sessions.

TIMING

1 Corinthians 14:40 Everything should be done in a proper and orderly way.

When we get a message from God for another person, usually we just share it. Sometimes though, we need to think about what God wants us to do with the message. This is often the case when the message is quite personal.

Let's say you have a sensitive word from the Lord about someone. The options to consider are:

- Should I tell them in front of everyone or is it private?
- Should I tell them at all? If not, what do I do with the information (maybe it's so you can pray for them)?
- Do I sense that this is the right time to give the message, or should I wait?
- Should I share what I have received with the leader to see what they think?

Getting a message is easy. Sharing it can be the hard part. Remember not to let nerves stop you! Whenever you receive something from God you need to do something with it; even if it is simply to pray for the person or situation.

GOD'S PRESENCE

When you come into the presence of God to worship him and to listen to what he says there are times when you will sense his presence.

This can vary from just a little bit to times when his presence almost completely overwhelms you.

These times are wonderful and mean that God is doing some exciting things.

Psalm 16:11 You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you. You will give me endless pleasures at your right hand.

When God's presence is particularly strong it is almost like our emotions jump up and dance with excitement. You will see all sorts of things. People laughing, crying, kneeling, and lying flat on the floor. People unable to stand, shaking, listening, dancing and so on.

1 Kings 8:10&11 The cloud filled the temple of the Lord. The priests couldn't do their work because of it. That's because the glory of the Lord filled his temple.

Acts 4:31 After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They were bold when they spoke God's Word.

Often certain things happen before, during and after God blesses us with his presence.

BEFORE:

- People are in unity together.
- Worship and prayer is going on.
- There is desperation for the things of God.

DURING

- God comes and does miraculous things in people's lives. These sometimes include emotional healing, cleansing, filling, strengthening and deliverance.

AFTER

- The people are stronger in their faith.
- They are bolder in their witnessing.
- They are surer about the love of God in their lives.

You cannot 'turn on' the presence of God like a tap, but his presence is a great thing to long for.

Every Christian should sense the gentle presence of God with them often.

WORSHIP, BIBLE & PRAYER AS A DEVOTIONAL LIFESTYLE

The way to sensing God's presence is by getting to know him.

2 Chronicles 15:2 The Lord is with you when you are with him. If you really look for him, you will find him.

Discuss the things that make someone a best friend. Ask if anyone has ever had a friend where they sometimes know what the other one is thinking?

God wants to be our closest friend. We need to come close to him so we can sense his presence.

To do that we need to have a strong devotional life.

This is a time we set aside every day to talk to God and to listen to him. In other words, it is a time where we develop our friendship with our creator.

DEVOTION EXERCISE

The three main parts of devotions are worship, reading the Bible and prayer.

Let's do it now.

I will lead you through. It will take about 15 minutes.

This is your own time with God so find your own space and be ready with your Bible.

Get the children to start by praying; asking God to speak to them during this time.

Put on a worship song and encourage them to worship.

Then get them to read a chapter in their Bible, expecting God to speak to them through his Word.

Encourage them to spend 5 minutes talking and listening to God. It is about them and God. Other times are for praying for other people and situations.

CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

Ask if there is anyone who needs prayer. When you know what they need prayer for, ask the other children to wait on God and then do whatever he tells them to do.

When they are finished, ask for another child with a need they are willing to share. Repeat the process.

Continue as time allows.

Remember that your sensitivity to God helps you grow so that he can trust you with more important things.

HOMEWORK

Ask them to make sure they work out a time to have their personal devotions with God each day. Tell them you can't wait to hear how their devotional times went when you meet next week.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 16: 11 You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you. You will give me endless pleasures at your right hand.

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION SEVEN

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING

Visitation
Revelation
Dreams
Inspired singing
Holy Spirit leading next week

DOING

Singing
Singing & prophesying

PREPARATION

Make sure the room is set up.

Make sure you have enough exercise books for the small groups.

Prepare by carefully studying the session. Spend time making sure you fully understand what will be happening in the session.

Print off take home memory verse for each child.

Bring a letter for the parents if you are going ahead with the excursion.

OPENING PRAYER

Ask a child to open in prayer.

REVISION

Check who knows their memory verse.

Ask questions about a few things you discussed in previous sessions.

VISITATION

A visitation is fairly rare and is usually an angel bringing a message from God.

Some people have even seen Jesus.

There are many examples of messengers in the Bible. One of the most famous was the angels telling the shepherds about the birth of Jesus.

Read *Luke 2:8-15*

Here is another example:

*Acts 5:17-21 The high priest and all his companions were Sadducees. They were very jealous of the apostles. So they arrested them and put them in the public prison. But during the night an **angel of the Lord** came. He opened the prison doors and brought the apostles out. 'Go! Stand in the temple courtyard,' the angel said. 'Tell the people all about this new life.' Early the next day they did as*

they had been told. They entered the temple courtyard. There they began to teach the people.

REVELATION

Revelation is when God reveals something to us that we did not know. The two types of revelation are:

1. **Information** - *Acts 10:19&20 Peter was still thinking about the vision. The Holy Spirit spoke to him. 'Simon,' he said, 'three men are looking for you. Get up and go down stairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them.'* Peter went down and spoke to the men. *'I'm the one you are looking for,' he said. 'Why have you come?'*

God tells Peter that there are three men downstairs that he should go with.

2. Understanding/enlightenment

Psalm 119:18. Open my eyes so that I can see the wonderful truths in your law.

Sometimes when you are reading the Bible you might suddenly say, 'now I get it'. God loves to reveal something to us that we didn't fully understand before.

DREAMS

Sometimes God speaks to us through a dream.

*Job 33:15&16. He might speak in a **dream** or in a vision at night. That's when people are sound asleep in their beds.*

Ask God to speak to you through dreams and help you know when a dream is from him.

You may even remember a dream from your past that may have been from God.

Mary and Joseph saved the life of Jesus when he was a baby by obeying a dream they had.

Matthew 2:12 God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they returned to their country on a different road.

INSPIRED SINGING

Most Christians love to worship God by singing to him. It would be very exciting to have the Holy Spirit give you a song to sing that you have never heard before.

It is possible to make up a song of worship to God. It may not be very tuneful and the words might not work out too well but it is still an expression of love. God loves it when we make up songs to express our love to him.

SINGING EXERCISE

If you would like to have a go then you can do it now. There is no pressure on anyone to participate. The singing we are about to do is not inspired by the Holy Spirit. They are just songs we are going to make up as we go.

Ps 149:1&3

Praise the Lord. Sing a new song to the Lord. Sing praise to him in the community of his faithful people. Let them praise his name with dancing. Let them make music to him with harps and tambourines.

You, the leader, sing a simple sentence of praise to God or have someone or a child lined up ready.

Now ask for volunteers to make up a simple one sentence song like you did.

Keep going if you keep getting volunteers.

Now we are going to ask God to give one or more of you a song that is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Once again, lead by example, or use the person lined up.

Now ask the children to wait and see if the Holy Spirit gives any of them something to sing.

When they are finished encourage everyone.

PROPHETIC EXERCISE

There may be times when you need to prophesy over somebody and you do not know what you are going to say. If you are willing to step out in faith, God will often give you the words to say – sometimes as late as when you open your mouth!

It can be the same with singing a Holy Spirit inspired song.

I am asking for children who are willing to either sing or prophesy if I point to them. If you are willing to prophesy hold a blue card or/and if you are willing to sing hold a red card.

Now let's ask God to prepare our hearts.

As the leader, make sure you are being led by the Spirit. Point to someone and go from there.

Talk about how it all went at the end.

HOLY SPIRIT LED NEXT WEEK

Tell the children that the last session is going to be completely Holy Spirit led.

Tell them the subject is going to be 'A Heart for the Lost' (or whatever you sense the subject should be).

Ask them: What are some other ways we can be led by the Holy Spirit? Things we have not talked about much?

Examples of answers are dance, rap, writing, speaking, art, craft, poems, testimonies, object lessons etc.

Talk to them about that and see if there are any volunteers who would like to pray about the subject and bring something ready for next week that they feel is guided by the Holy Spirit.

They could even team up with others.

EXCURSION

Take the children to a lookout or similar high point over your town or region. Get them to worship God and then to ask him what he is saying about the town or region.

MEMORY VERSE

Ps 149:1&3

Praise the Lord. Sing a new song to the Lord. Sing praise to him in the community of his faithful people. Let them praise his name with dancing. Let them make music to him with harps and tambourines.

Ask the children to memorise it for the next session or teach it during this session.

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask someone to close in prayer, thanking God for what he has taught them today.

SESSION EIGHT

HOLY SPIRIT INSPIRED MEETING

OBJECTIVES

DOING

This whole session is devoted to allowing the Holy Spirit to guide the children's time of fellowship together.

PREPARATION

- Have some worship music on standby that they can use if they feel led. Some children may come prepared as well.
- Make sure the room is set up to suit the Holy Spirit inspired meeting.
- Have the memory verse rewards ready.
- Bring party goods if you are going to have a celebration at the end.

REVISION

Check who knows the memory verse from last week.

Check who knows all the memory verses and give them their reward.

GETTING STARTED

Talk to the children about things they may have prepared. Let them know that they need to wait until they sense it is the right time to use what they have prepared.

Have a few children open the meeting in prayer, asking God to guide everyone.

Allow them to start.

Your role is just to guide them and keep them on track.

They may take a while to get going, but usually their confidence and faith increases as the meeting progresses.

At the end have a few of them **CLOSE IN PRAYER**, thanking God for what he has done during the meeting.

You may want to have a little surprise celebration party at the end.