

STREAMS

INTRODUCTION

THE WORD-FILLED LIFE

Discovering ways to share and be the Good News of Jesus Christ



REVIEW

Review your experience of the previous practice. How did it go? If you weren't able to do the practice, consider how you were able to connect with God last week?

READ

Read the passage several times through, read slowly, use your imagination to picture the scene and soak it up. As you read, look for one or two points that really impact you. We call these 'shockers' and 'blockers'. The 'Setting the Scene' information adds some further context about the passage.



Luke 4.14-22

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁴ Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. ¹⁵ He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."^[f]

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.

REFLECT

As a group take time to discuss what you've read. Start by sharing your 'shockers' and 'blockers.' As you share your thoughts, listen carefully to one another. Feel free to use the questions to help you reflect further and extend your conversation.

Setting the scene:

- Nazareth was nowhere special but it was here among his friends and neighbours, where Jesus ministered. Here (in Nazareth) the village carpenter reads the Scriptures like no-one has heard before.
- The Scriptures' refers to much of what we now call the Old Testament. The Jewish audience would have been familiar with these books and their prophecies.
- Through Jesus' words and actions, he implicitly claims to be the Messiah! No wonder they were amazed, many would have known Jesus as a kid in the town and now he is proclaiming God's kingdom and pointing to himself as the fulfillment of the passage from Isaiah 61.
- Jesus understood his mission as bringing good news to a hurting world - offering freedom and hope to those in need. When he declared, 'This is the year,' he wasn't pointing to a specific date on the calendar, but announcing the dawning of a new era of salvation, rescue, and deliverance.

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What are the 'shockers' or 'blockers' for you in this passage?

What amazes you most about Jesus?

God uses three main ways to reveal himself – the Bible, Jesus, and sharing of faith. How did you come to know about Jesus?

RESPOND

As you have read and reflected on the passage, it's now time to consider how to respond.

Consider the following set of practices to help you respond to the theme of this session over the coming week. Choose one and feel free to adapt to make it work for you.

01 Remember, Remember

The Jewish educational system required young children to memorise large chunks of the Old Testament. By the age of 12 years, most children had learnt the Torah (the first five books of the Bible) by heart!

Memorising

Scripture allows God's word to permeate deep into our hearts. Why not write down some verses this week. You could stick them to a mirror or on the fridge. Read them until you can recite them by heart.

Try these verses to get you going: Galatians 2.20, Romans 5.1, John 3.16, Psalm 1.1, Ephesians 2.8.

02 The Whole Truth

Commit time this week to reading a whole book from the Bible, maybe one of the Gospels, or one of Paul's letters (including Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians). See what difference taking in the whole book makes compared to a verse here or there. In ancient times, Scripture would often be read out loud. If you can – try it for yourself. Alternatively, listen to an audio version of the Bible. Immerse yourself in the story in one sitting if you can.

03 Psalm a day

Meditate on a Psalm each day this week. The Psalms are wonderful, real-life prayers that help us to connect with God. Read them slowly, over and over and let them lead you into prayers for yourself and for others.

GOING DEEPER

Share your story

Find time this week to spend some quality time with a friend who doesn't know Jesus. Ask them about their life story and take the opportunity to appropriately share your own. If they are interested, tell them what difference your faith has made in your life, what God means to you, and how you became a Christian. Be careful not to force your story, don't pretend to have all the answers and try not to use religious jargon. Some people will naturally find this easier to do than others, but it's good to be able to talk concisely and intelligently about your faith. If it helps, write down what you might say to someone who asks about your faith - how would you communicate clearly and helpfully? It's good to be prepared to share your faith.

You might also be interested in:

Richard J. Foster speaks about the Word Centred Life on the Renovaré Podcast:

<https://renovare.org/podcasts/lifewithgod/richard-foster-streams-evangelical-tradition>

The Fire of the Word: Meeting God on Holy Ground (a book by Chris Webb)

'The Bible is primarily a book not of information but of formation, not merely a book to be analyzed, scrutinized, and discussed but a sacred book to nurture us, to unify our hearts and minds, and to serve as a constant source of contemplation.' (Henri Nouwen)