

Holiday discipleship for all the family

A Philippian summer

Why not spend a bit of time as a family over the summer holidays reading the Bible together? Here are some imaginative ways of getting to know Paul's Letter to the Philippians. There are suggestions for different ways of reading the passages, and six themes to explore together, with activities that will appeal to all ages.

Why did Paul write his Letter to the Philippians?

Paul's main reason for writing to the church community in Philippi was to thank them for a gift of money they'd

sent him when they found out he'd been arrested in Rome. But Paul uses his thank you letter to say a few other things. He urges the Philippians to stay strong and united in the face of persecution. He tells them that they are citizens of heaven, and encourages them to rejoice and pray.

Ways of reading the passages

Choose an accessible version of the Bible like *New Living Translation* or *The Message*. Compare versions at www.biblegateway.com. Find different ways of reading each Bible passage,



e.g. read the passage slowly in unison; family members could read a verse/section each; have one person read the whole passage while others identify key words, draw a response or express the passage in movement or mime. Experiment with reading the Bible in different rooms or the garden and at different times of day.

Week 1 Shining



Ready Spend five minutes talking about the people who are important to you as a family, and why. List their names or draw some of them on a large sheet of paper.

Read Philippians 1.3-9 (see above)

Paul is really thankful that he knows the Philippians and prays hard for them. He wants them all to know how much God loves them, so that their love will overflow to others.

Respond Cut out the names or pictures of people who are important to you all and stick them in different places around the house, e.g. on the fridge, on doors, on the bathroom mirror. Whenever you see them this week, give thanks and pray for each of them.

Week 2 Loving



Ready Find as many ways as you can to write the word LOVE, e.g. bubble writing, paint, plasticine, fridge magnets, Lego™.

Read Philippians 2.1-4 (see above)

Paul thinks that the best community is one that is loving and where people try not to fall out with each other.

Respond Think about someone you find difficult to get along with and write his or her name on a piece of paper. Then take one of the forms of LOVE that you have written/created and put it over the top of the name. As you do this, ask God to help you love that person.

Week 3 Living



Ready Using a timer, give everyone 10 seconds to explain what Jesus did on earth. Give a prize to the family member who gives the best explanation.

Read Philippians 2.6-11 (see above)

Paul paints a picture of all that Jesus has done for the Philippians, to remind them that he is at the centre of their new lives as Christians and worthy of their worship.

Respond Choose a worship song you all know and sing it together or find one on YouTube and play it, e.g. *I will rise* by Chris Tomlin.

Week 4 Sharing



Ready Play a variation on the game Hangman with the words 'change' and 'power'. For each wrong guess draw a summer picture with 10 details, e.g. a sailing boat, a decorated sandcastle.

Read Philippians 3.5b-11 (see above)

The life of Paul (previously Saul) totally changed when he saw Jesus in a vision on the road to Damascus. He became temporarily blind, but stopped persecuting Christians and began to preach about Jesus as the Son of God.

Respond Use your power to help bring about change, e.g. sign an online petition (see www.38degrees.org.uk or www.change.org), or raise money for charity, e.g. sell cakes, have a car boot sale.

Week 5 Running



Ready Have a family race. You may have to give younger members a head start or give older members a disadvantage, e.g. carry something, hop.

Read Philippians 3.12-14 (see above)

Paul sees life as an exciting race in which he is aiming for the prize: life forever with Jesus.

Respond Do a relay race prayer. Stand in different places around the garden or in a large space. Using a stick or wooden spoon as a baton, the youngest person runs to the next oldest person and passes the baton on, and so on. While running, everyone says: 'Help me, God, to run your race'.

Week 6 Rejoicing



Ready How do you rejoice as a family? Talk about what you do at birthdays and Christmas.

Read Philippians 4.4-7 (see above)

Paul reminds the Philippians to be joyful and not to worry about anything. If they rejoice and pray, God will fill them with his special peace.

Respond Plan a joyful celebration to mark the end of the summer holiday. You could cook a special family meal, hold a party, or invite friends and neighbours round for a barbecue.

