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## INTRODUCTION FOR TEACHERS AND YOUTH LEADERS

*The Manga Bible* serves as a great introduction to the New Testament due to its brevity and visual interpretation of the Bible stories. Although it was not possible to include all of the New Testament, the reader should get a good overview of the main elements. This resource should work well with any group of young people, but perhaps especially with those less familiar with the Bible.

The resource is for 11–18 year olds and is suitable for young people of all abilities. To cover this broad age-range (who learn in different ways), the questions have two sections. The first section has easier questions and discussion starters. The second section takes a more abstract approach for older students.

The eight weekly sessions are designed in such a way as to be useful as a whole course, or as stand-alone teaching material. Each session constitutes about an hour's worth of activity/study in a group.

The resource assumes that the group have access to copies of *The Manga Bible*. For a discount on bulk purchases please contact the Hodder sales department: [religious-sales@hodder.co.uk](mailto:religious-sales@hodder.co.uk)

As teacher or guide, it is advisable to read through the questions and Bible sections in advance as some of the answers may require a little thought!

## Resource Structure

Each of the eight sessions are broken down into the following elements:

- **Opener:** a discussion question or activity to open up the session.
- **Intro to topic:** introduces the key issue for the session and gives some historical or cultural background.
- **Reading** – at this point the group reads a short section from *The Manga Bible*.
- **Questions for discussion:** some basic questions to ensure that the group has understood the section they have read. These questions begin to ask what relevance the topic has for the participants.
- **Going Deeper:** more questions to grapple with the topic in more detail, for older groups or those who want to discuss further.
- **Apply:** to end the session, there is a short thought or activity, which helps the participants to apply the teaching from *The Manga Bible* to their everyday lives.

# **SESSIONS**

# SESSION 1

## Intro: The Book of the Gospels

### Opener

Start the session by going around the group and asking everyone to answer the question ‘Which celebrity do you most admire?’ Try to encourage everyone to participate, and say what they find inspiring or admirable about the celebs they pick.

Answers will vary, but try to draw out the qualities they admire in each one. Maybe they’ll pick someone who has played sport in a National team, or overcome illness, or adopted a baby from overseas. Other answers will be more frivolous!

Explain to the group that we’re going to look at one of the most admired ‘celebs’ of all time: Jesus.

### Intro to today’s topic

I wonder if you’ve ever heard a familiar story told in a new way... or had a teacher manage to explain a difficult concept using a diagram instead of words? Sometimes looking at things in a different way can help us see them with a fresh perspective. That’s what Siku (pronounced sheekoo) has done with *The Manga Bible*. He’s taken some of the stories you’ve probably heard loads of times and told them in a new way using ‘Manga’ or Japanese-style illustrations.

Excited? Sceptical? Keep an open mind as we look at the start of *The Manga Bible* and the introduction of our main character: Jesus. There’s no nativity play in sight, honest!

***Read the first five pages of The Manga Bible together.***

## Questions for discussion

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. The book begins with a pretty violent story... King Herod wants to murder all the babies in Bethlehem. Why did he want to do this? (Look at the Kings' discussion.)
2. The Kings decide not to report back to Herod about the baby's location. It would have been treason not to obey the King's orders so they were risking their lives. Why do you think they did this for a baby?
3. Look at the description of John the Baptist, he's 'fearless and full of attitude'. Does he remind you of anyone?
4. What would have been your reaction to his message?
5. What does baptism symbolise?
6. Who is John the Baptist referring to when he says 'someone is coming who will baptise you with fire?'
7. Why do you think John the Baptist was sent as a messenger before Jesus?

## Going Deeper

1. John the Baptist is speaking to a pretty evil bunch of people. He tells them to 'repent' which means 'turn away' from the bad things they're doing. What do you think their reaction would have been?
2. Do you think the message still applies to us today?
3. He told them to give away their possessions and 'not make false accusations'. What does this tell you about the society at the time?

## Apply

Bring the discussion to a close by discussing the following:

Think back to the opening activity where you described which celebrity you most admired. Some of the characters in *The Manga Bible* may have some of the same qualities. Pick one quality you'd like to work at yourself and aim to put it into practice this week.

## **SESSION 2**

### **Good vs Evil: The Book of the Gospels**

#### **Opener**

Get a big piece of paper and ask the group to make a list of things they would consider ‘good’ or ‘evil’ in the world today. Write down the suggestions in two lists and then ask everyone what they think the causes of those things are.

#### **Intro to today’s topic**

There are lots of things that happen in the world today that are good, and others that are evil. This session, we’re going to look at Jesus’ first encounter with the devil, or Satan. The Bible tells us that just as God is the source of all good, the devil is behind everything that is evil.

Also, remember last week when we looked at John the Baptist – the crazy character? We meet him again in the first part of this session...

*Read pages 6 to 9 of The Manga Bible together.*

#### **Questions for discussion**

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read.

1. This is the first time we see Jesus. Why do you think his face is drawn blank when we first see him?
2. Jesus lets John the Baptist baptise him. Does this seem strange at all to you? What reason does Jesus give?
3. We read that ‘The voice of God boomed, “This is my dearest Son, with whom I am well pleased.”’ What happens next? What affect do God’s words have on Jesus?
4. Jesus is tempted by Satan. What do you think of the way the devil is depicted – why do you think his face is blank?
5. How does the devil tempt Jesus?

6. What do the temptations Jesus goes through tell us about a) Satan  
b) Jesus.
7. How does Jesus respond to the temptations? What can we learn from the way he reacts?
8. How does Jesus end the conversation with Satan?

### **Going Deeper**

1. When are you tempted in your life? What kind of things do you sometimes want to do even though you know they are wrong?
2. What can you do in these situations? What can you learn from Jesus' response?
3. Jesus said to Satan, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' What does that mean for you today?

### **Apply**

To finish, bring the discussion to a close by discussing the following:

Jesus has won the war against evil, Jesus was and is supreme good. When we resist Satan, he has no choice but to leave us (James 4:7). What can you learn from Jesus' reaction to Satan (representing evil) and how might this apply to your everyday life?

## **SESSION 3**

### **Parables: The Good Samaritan**

#### **Opener**

Start by going around the group and asking everyone to answer the question: ‘Who is your neighbour?’ Don’t prompt them or say certain answers are right or wrong... wait to hear the group’s gut reaction to the question.

Answers may have varied between explaining the names and ages of the people who live directly next door; those in the area or across the road, or people we know in the same town. Some in the group may not know their neighbours at all. Explain to the group that there’s no right or wrong answer, and maybe some people answered differently depending on their background or culture.

Today we’re going to look at a story, or parable, that Jesus told when he was asked the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’

#### **Intro to today’s topic**

In Jesus’ time in Israel, communities were much closer than they are today. It was unusual for people to travel very far away from where they lived, and you would have known the names of almost everyone on your street. Several generations of families would live together in the same house. Still today in the Middle East you will see houses with several floors – when someone in the family gets married and starts their own family they will often build another floor on top of their parents house. Family and community was a key part of everyday life. Everyone would have known their neighbours.

That’s why the question Jesus was asked at the start of this story is so strange...

*Read The Parable of the Good Samaritan together.*

## **Questions for discussion**

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. Why had Jesus attracted such a large crowd of people? Why do you think they were there?
2. What do you think of the vicar's reaction?
3. Why do you think the vicar didn't want to get involved?
4. Why is it significant that the foreigner (the 'Samaritan') helped the man who was injured?
5. The foreigner takes the man to an inn and leaves enough money for him to be cared for. Why do you think he acts so generously?
6. Do you think the parable answers the original question 'Who is my neighbour?'
7. Think back to the discussion we had at the start of the session. Would your answer to the question 'Who is your neighbour?' be different because of what we have discussed today?

## **Going Deeper**

1. Think of a time in your life when you have encountered someone in need. Did you help them? If so how? Was it a sacrifice? How did you feel afterwards?
2. Is it easier to help those in need who we know – such as friends and family – rather than strangers? When you help friends and family in need, what are your reasons?
3. Think about the foreigner in the story... what do you think his motives were for helping in such a selfless way?

## **Apply**

To finish, bring the discussion to a close by discussing the following:

Can we help everyone? Discuss some ideas for helping those in need in your community and the best ways to go about this.

## **SESSION 4**

### **Parables: The Story of the Prodigal Son**

#### **Opener**

To open today's discussion, get the group to think about their relationship with their brothers and sisters (if some participants do not have siblings ask them to think about their cousins or close friends they spend time with). Ask a few people to share one thing they like about their sibling(s) and one thing they find annoying. Try not to let the conversation degenerate or get too negative!

#### **Intro to today's topic**

It's normal to love our brothers and sisters while still finding certain things they do annoying.

Today we're going to look at a story, or parable, that Jesus told about a pair of brothers. At the time there were two groups of people listening: the first group were the tax collectors and 'sinners', and the second were the 'Pharisees' or religious people. The religious people were shocked that Jesus would speak to the 'sinners'. The story he told them all may have embarrassed the Pharisees though...

*Read the story of The Prodigal Son together*

#### **Questions for discussion**

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. The younger son 'demands' that his father give him his inheritance. In the culture of the time this was the equivalent of saying 'I wish you were dead.' Why do you think he does this?
2. How do you think the father felt when his son took his money and ran?
3. How does the father react when the son returns?

4. Are you surprised by his reaction? Why?
5. You will have noticed that the author of *The Manga Bible* has crossed out 'Prodigal Son' in the title and replaced it with 'Unforgiving Brother'. Why do you think this is?
6. Do you think the elder brother's reaction is justified?
7. Who do you identify with the most – the younger or elder brother?

## **Going Deeper**

1. When the younger son is hit by hard times, he think of his father. Some say that the father in the story symbolises God, and the son is one of us humans on earth. Do you ever react like the younger son and remember God when things get tough? Give an example.
2. When he returns to his father the younger son says 'I have sinned against heaven and against you.' In what ways has he sinned 'against heaven'?
3. Read the story in the NIV version of the Bible. What gifts does the father give to the son? What do they represent? (Answer – Kiss: forgiveness; Best robe: honoured guest; Ring: shows the father would pay all of his son's debts; Sandals: slaves wore bare feet, he is no longer a slave).

## **Apply**

To finish, bring the discussion to a close by discussing the following:

One of the main messages of the Parable is that God (shown here as the father) accepts us whatever we have done. Do you find this easy to understand? Does that mean we can do whatever we want, knowing that God still loves us?

## **SESSION 5**

### **Jesus Dies, and Rises Again**

#### **Opener**

Go around the group and ask everyone to say the best thing another person has ever done for them. Encourage everyone to participate. People may say things their parents have done, or someone who helped them with a problem or difficulty. Draw the answers together by explaining that when we love people we automatically want to do things to help them. Christians believe that God loved people so much that he sent Jesus to die for them, to take away the bad things they had done...

#### **Intro to today's topic**

Today we're going to look at Jesus' death, or the 'Easter story', many Christians see this as an event that changed the world forever. The Jews at the time were waiting for the 'Messiah', or saviour, who they thought would be a political leader. Jesus wasn't exactly what they had in mind... The religious leaders wanted him killed because they saw him as a threat.

*Read from the Council of the Pharisees to just before the start of the Book of the Apostles together*

#### **Questions for discussion**

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. Why did the Council of the Pharisees see Jesus as a threat?
2. Why did they think their whole religion was threatened by Jesus?
3. The night before he dies, Jesus eats bread and drinks wine with his disciples. What symbolism does this have?
4. Jesus knew he was going to die, yet he prays to his Father 'It's not what I want but what you want... my Father'. How do you think he felt?

5. How does Judas betray Jesus? What happens to him eventually (you may need to skip forward a few pages to find out!)
6. Look at what happens to Jesus with the Sadducees and then with Pontius Pilate. Do you think Jesus got a fair trial?
7. Jesus died a violent death, he was stripped, beaten and nailed to a wooden cross. Why do Christians believe he had to die in this way?
8. Christians believe that Jesus died in our place – to take the blame for the things we have all done wrong (sin). How do you feel about the idea that Jesus died for you?
9. We read that Jesus ‘rose again’ from the dead. What happens next?

### **Going Deeper**

1. If you were one of the disciples, how would you have felt when Jesus died? Bear in mind that the disciples had given up everything to follow him and believed he was the Son of God.
2. Why do you think some people believed Jesus had risen and others doubted? What category would you have been in?

### **Apply**

To finish, discuss the following:

Think about what you’ve heard about Jesus so far... what can you take from what you have read to apply to your own life?

## **SESSION 6**

### **Book of the Apostles**

#### **Opener**

Ask the group to think about the following question:

Think of a time in your life when you have had to stand up for something you really believed in. (Perhaps it was a friend who was being bullied, or supporting a different football team.) How did you deal with the situation? What drove you to stick to your principles?

Then ask a few people to feed back to the group. Try to draw out some of the reasons behind the motivation to stick up for something they believe in.

#### **Intro to today's topic**

The book of the Apostles (called 'Acts' in most Bibles) describes the story of Jesus' disciples, or followers, after he had died and risen again. Jesus asked them to 'go make disciples of all nations', and this book is about their journeys across the world to tell people about Jesus' teaching. They started in Jerusalem, and between them they travelled far and wide – Thomas ended up in India, Peter in Italy. They had a tough time, not everyone agreed with their teaching and they were seen as a threat to the strict religious rule of the day. New believers travelled with them and helped to carry the message, including Paul, the convert.

*Read the first 12 pages of **The Book of the Apostles** together (up until Paul's house arrest in Rome)*

#### **Questions for discussion**

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. The first part of the book describes what is sometimes called the

day of Pentecost, where the Holy Spirit came on all the believers. Up until this point not everyone had received God's Holy Spirit. What happened to the disciples as a result of Pentecost?

2. What do you think Siku means when he writes 'God kick started a revolution'?
3. Can you see the results of this revolution today?
4. Peter and John heal the cripple on the temple steps. How is their reaction different from those walking the other way? Does their action remind you of earlier stories? (Prompt: the Good Samaritan.)
5. Why does Peter and John's behaviour provoke such a violent reaction from the authorities?
6. What do the apostles do when the going gets tough?

### **Going Deeper**

1. Look at the story of Paul. What persecutions does he come across and how does he respond?
2. Why do you think Paul was so determined?
3. Imagine you were one of the Jewish leaders listening to Paul's message – what do you think you would have made of him? Would it have been easy to believe what he said?

### **Apply**

To finish, bring the discussion to a close by discussing the following:

The apostles went through some tough times, they were arrested, beaten, shipwrecked and ridiculed, to name a few of the things that happened to them. How do you cope with the tough times in your own life? Discuss what you can learn from their example.

## **SESSION 7**

### **Letter to the Corinthians**

#### **Opener**

Parents who love their children often encourage them to do things they don't want to do – like eat their greens and do their homework! Perhaps your parents do the same to you... Go round the group and discuss one thing your parents encourage you to do and why you think they do it. Try to keep the discussion positive! Perhaps give a few examples to start them off.

Explain that sometimes people in our lives tell us what to do because they love us. That's what Paul is doing in the letters he wrote to the early church.

#### **Intro to today's topic**

We read about Paul in The Book of the Apostles, he was the guy who hated Christians and gave orders for them to be murdered. He then had a powerful experience – God spoke to him – and he became a follower of Jesus. His life was totally changed.

At some stage he visited the Roman Colony of Corinth. It was quite a large city, with 600,000 people. It had grown up as an important port with lots of ships carrying goods in and out. The people there were fairly well off. A church had begun in Corinth because of Paul's visit, but a few years later he hears on the grapevine that all is not well... he decides to write them a letter.

***Read about Paul's letters to the Corinthian's together (pages 13-16 of The Book of the Apostles).***

## Questions for discussion

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. What are the problems in Corinth?
2. Why does Paul write to them?
3. Does the letter only apply to those in Corinth?
4. People everywhere gathered to read Paul's letter. Why do you think they all wanted to hear what he had to say?
5. The people in Corinth have divided into different groups who believe slightly different things. Why do you think this has happened? Can you see similarities in our world today?
6. Why is Paul often drawn looking out of windows?
7. Paul tells them to 'Aim for perfection' – what do you think this means practically?
8. What do you think Paul means when he writes 'Be of one mind'?

## Going Deeper

1. Paul addresses issues of sexual immorality in his letter. He says they are 'proud' – why do you think this is?
2. Why does he say 'Don't you realise that Christ is in you'??
3. How do you think the people at Corinth would have reacted to reading the letter?

## Apply

To finish, discuss the following:

Imagine you were an important politician and you had to write a letter to your town or village or city to encourage them. What kind of things would you include in the letter?

## SESSION 8

### Revelation

#### Opener

This is the last session, so open the discussion by asking the group to reflect on what they've heard and learnt over the past few weeks. Ask them to say one thing they've learnt that surprised them and feed back to the group.

#### Intro to today's topic

The Book of Revelation was written by John, the same guy who wrote the Gospel of John. It's one of the most difficult books to understand in the whole Bible and different people think it has different meanings. We're going to have a quick look at it today in *The Manga Bible* to try to make sense of what it might be trying to say to us, and what we can take from it today.

*Read Revelation from The Manga Bible together*

#### Questions for discussion

Use the following questions to engage the group with what they have just read. Encourage everyone to participate.

1. The book of Revelation is described as 'prophetic'? What does 'prophetic' mean?
2. Who do you think is saying the words 'Don't be afraid... I am he who lives but was dead...'?
3. What do you think the horses represent?
4. What do you think the angels represent?
5. Who or what is the 'beast'?
6. Imagine you were having this dream – how would you feel on seeing the 'white horse'?
7. When the battle is over, we read that John saw a new heaven and a new earth – what do you think a 'new earth' would look like?

8. The book ends with a vision of the future – what do you think about the future described (no more crying, etc.)?

### **Going Deeper**

1. Who or what do you think the ‘false prophet’ in the dream is?
2. What does it mean when God says ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end’?
3. Why do you think this book has so many different interpretations?

### **Apply**

To finish, bring the discussion to a close by asking the group to reflect on what they have read and discussed over the past few weeks. What if anything did they find surprising? Did *The Manga Bible* encourage them to read more of the stories in the Bible? Allow some time for people to ask any questions they may have. And remember to look out for *The Manga Bible* Full Bible (including the Old Testament) in July 07!

## Notes

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