



SESSION **3**

Jesus will return



MEETING AIM

To see what the Bible says about how Jesus will come again.



BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11



BACKGROUND

The apostle Paul, whose life had been dramatically turned around, had been on several journeys to take the message of Jesus to much of the world as he knew it. We can see Paul's visit to the city of Thessalonica in Acts 17. Paul had spent some time in the city and planted a church there, but had had to leave before the church was fully established.

Paul writes to encourage them, but also to help them navigate some confusion. The early Church believed Jesus would return in their lifetime, but this didn't seem to be happening. Indeed, some believers in Thessalonica had died, and this left the people confused. Paul addresses these confusions by reassuring them that they would get to be with Jesus for ever, whether or not they died before he came back. He encourages them to be ready for whenever that happened.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass around a simple object.

When a child has the object, they can share their response to the question. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything they can just pass the object on. Ask the children to talk about what they enjoy about being asleep and what they enjoy about being awake.

+ FILM CLIP



You will need: *Ice Age* DVD and the means to play it

Watch a clip from the movie *Ice Age* together, starting at 50:49 and finishing at 53:44. In the clip, Manny falls off the ice but comes back in a surprising way. After the clip, chat about how Manny got back. Do the children know of any other dramatic returns?

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a large sheet of paper; felt-tip pens

Get a big sheet of flip chart paper and either draw as you talk or let the children come and draw the things you're talking about.

Say: One of Jesus' early followers was a guy called Paul. Paul travelled all over the place telling people about Jesus and setting up churches. Once he had set up a church, he would write letters to them to encourage them and tell them things. One of the churches he set up was in a city called Thessalonica. *Get the group to repeat that.*

Paul wrote the Thessalonians a letter to tell them what to expect in the future. He told the Thessalonians that Jesus was going to come back. *Draw Jesus.*

He said that when this happened, everyone would hear angel voices and the trumpet call of God. *Draw an angel and a trumpet.*

Paul said that when this happened, Jesus would take his followers away with him. The Thessalonians were worried, though. What if they died before Jesus came? Paul said not to worry. Jesus would bring those people back to life first and take everyone with him. *Draw lots of people surrounding Jesus.*

Paul said everyone would be caught up into the clouds. *Draw clouds all around Jesus and all the people.*

We don't know for sure that this is how it will happen or whether it was Paul imagining what it would be like, but Paul told the Thessalonians that they needed to make sure they were ready. He used the word 'awake' to describe this. He said they needed to make sure they were encouraging each other while they waited for Jesus to come.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- Have you heard any of this before?
- What do you think about those ideas?
- How do you feel, knowing you can choose to be with God for ever?
- How can we be ready for Jesus to come back?
- Why do you think Paul uses the word 'awake' to describe being ready?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: card breastplate and helmet shapes cut from card (find these at youthandchildrens.work/links); felt-tip pens; string or elastic; Bible

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8 to the children again. Paul talks about being ready by wearing faith and love as a breastplate and salvation as a helmet. What he meant was remembering to treat others the way Jesus taught, and remembering that we will get to be with him for ever one day because he died for us.

Let the children decorate either a breastplate or a helmet with the right words. As you work, chat about today's story and what the children think of it. Make sure you provide space for them to ask any questions that they have. Don't be afraid to say that you don't know the answers to their questions, but make sure you commit to getting some answers from your church leaders, or from your own research.

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+ PRAYER AND REFLECTION



The Thessalonians were invited to encourage one another. Ask everyone to find a partner and pray a short encouraging prayer with them. For example: "Father God, please help [name] to remember that you love them." It's a good idea to demonstrate this with someone first so they get the right idea.

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