

CHARACTER

&

NATURE

OF

GOD

Consider & Prepare

Below is a meeting resource to use while children and adults are together in the meeting.

Questions to ask as you plan this are:

Can everybody do it? (optional joining-in is key to this, that people can do it IF they want to.)

Can everybody sit through it? (keep each part of the meeting 5-7 minutes long for those with shorter attention spans.)

Can everybody understand it? (is the language pitched so everyone has a good chance of understanding what is being said, demonstrated or sung or prayed?)

Can everyone learn from it? (are the teaching points presented for a variety of learning styles; body, visual kinetic; and are they suited to a range of personality types and levels of introversion/extroversion.)

Is everyone connecting with it? (are there enough connections to current life and local community, daily issues that people can see the sense in this?)

This is a special service that can be lead by a team, or all the members of a family, a Junior Soldiers group etc. There are a variety of activities listed to allow for interaction during the service, as well as quiet reflection and response.

Purpose

What is the character and nature of God and How Can I find out who God is?

- ❖ Can we know GOD? Where do we look to find him? Scripture, Creation, Be Still, Story.
- ❖ What are some of the things we Know about God?
- ❖ GOD is a mystery – he is indescribable. We may never know, understand or fully comprehend who God is.

Key Scripture

The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. Psalm 18:2 (NLV)



How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. Psalm 36:7 (NIV)

But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 1 John 4:8 (NIV)

Reflect

George Barna has recommended that when discipling children there are a series of questions that children should be asked, and allowed to ask. These are important questions for each one of us to explore and to be confident to answer.

The question we ask today is “Who is God?”

Take some time to reflect on who you believe God is. Read through the key scriptures given and think about how you have experienced these characteristics of God.

Think about the names that have been given to him, the characteristics that describe him and the things you have learnt about him through your own interactions with him.

Preparing for the Service:

Below is a meeting resource to use while children and adults are together in the meeting.

Please do not feel that you need to include everything. Choose the elements that will work for your group, your situation and your time frame.

Questions to ask as you plan this are:

Can everybody do it? (optional joining-in is key to this, that people can do it IF they want to).

Can everybody sit through it? (keep each part of the meeting 5-7 minutes long for those with shorter attention spans)

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What you will need

1. A3 or poster sized paper (26 sheets)
2. Blu tac3.
3. 0.6mm markers
4. Post-it notes (if using that option)
5. Bibles

Preparation:

Use the templates provided (or make your own) to create 26 sheets of activity paper, one for each letter of the alphabet - pick the size that will suit the number of people in your congregation eg A3, poster, flip chart. Put these on the walls around the space you are using prior to the meeting commencing. Think about whether everyone will be able to reach! Long strips of butcher's paper will allow smaller people to write on the bottom half without forcing taller people to bend too far.

Song Suggestions:

Choose songs that talk about who God is here are some suggestions:

- ❖ God of Wonders – *Chris Tomlin*
- ❖ Our God is a great big God – *Vineyard Music*
- ❖ Indescribable – *Chris Tomlin*
- ❖ The Heavens Shall Declare – *Hillsong*
- ❖ I believe in God the Father – *SASB*

Videos

- ❖ That's my King – this could be used at the start of the meeting to get people thinking about who God is. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE>
- ❖ 100 names of God – this clip could be used while the A-Z activity is happening and/or as a “credit role” at the end of the meeting. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xf18IWGTNwQ>
- ❖ God is not a white man – a fun video with a great message, could be used at any point in the meeting. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WybvRu9KU>

Suggested Meeting Outline – How can I know who God is?

Video Clip

God is Not a White Man

Introduction

Songs

(Include Hand Game – Knowing who God is)

The A-Z of Who God Is

Link

Scripture Activity

How do we know God?

(Sharing for Scripture Activity Option1)

Small Group Activity

How do we know God?

Video Clip

100 Names of God

Songs

Short Talk

Prayer Activity

How do we know God?

Response

Songs (Include Hand Game – Knowing who God is)

Benediction

Video Clip

God is Not a White Man

Introduction

Who is God? What is he like and what do we know about him? Knowing who God is can be tricky because we can't see him with our eyes, we can't hear him with our ears, we can't feel him with our hands, we can't smell him with our noses and we definitely can't taste him with our tongues! Usually when we are getting to know someone or something we use our physical senses to find out information. But God is not physical - he's not a white man - so we can't use our physical senses to describe him. When it comes to knowing God we have to use our spiritual senses.

Knowing who God is gets even trickier because God is so much greater than we can ever understand. Ecclesiastes 11:5 says "Just as you'll never understand the mystery of life forming in a pregnant woman, so you'll never understand the mystery at work in all that God does." (The Message) The exciting thing about this is that we will always have something new to learn about who God is and how he works.

Today we want each person here to see if they can discover something new about God.

Songs

(Include Hand Game – Knowing who God is)

Hand Game – Knowing who God is

This simple rhyme can be used to include all people (the preschoolers and body smart people will love it!) and give them an easy way to remember "Knowing who God is".

Give them time to learn it and repeat it and enjoy it.

Sing to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

God made trees that grow so tall,

Raise hands and stand on tiptoes

And the little ants so small.

Squat down

Apples red, the big bright sun,

Make small circle with hands, then large circle with arms

Stars that shine when day is done.

Wiggle finger to show twinkling stars

Mummies, daddies, babies, too.

Pretend to rock baby

God made me, and God made you.

Point to self then someone else

(From 100 Action Songs for Preschoolers by David C Cook)

The A-Z of who God is

This activity is an opportunity to get people moving. Physical movement is very helpful as it assists us to refocus, increases our ability to retain information and concentrate for another period of time in an optimal manner.

Try to think of a characteristic or attribute of God for each letter of the alphabet.

People can work in groups, pairs or on their own. Choose what will work well for your congregation or allow them to choose for themselves. Young children who do not write will be able to draw pictures or tell someone who can write their ideas for them.

There are two ways you could run this activity:

1. Use blu tac to hold marker pens (recommend 0.6mm) to the wall next to the alphabet sheets. This will allow people to move around and write directly on the sheets of paper as they find a word for that letter. (Hint: Use a double layer of paper to prevent the marker from going through onto the wall.)
2. Give everyone post-it notes and markers. Post-it notes are then placed on the alphabet sheets around the space. (Note: One characteristic per post-it note.)

Link

Look around the room...

Together we already know a lot about God. When we share what we know with each other we can get

a better idea of who God is.

The Bible also tells us a lot about who God is. Let's see what else we can find out about God by looking at some verses.

Scripture Activity – How do we know God?

Option 1

Print scripture references that show a wide variety of the characteristics, attributes and nature of God. Think about how this will work best in your context.

Hand out one set of scripture references per person or group.

Each set of references reveals something of who God is to us.

Choose one way, for everyone to share what they discover with the rest of the congregation. Here are some ideas:

- ❖ Use alphabet blocks or scrabble tiles to make the word
- ❖ Up front leader asks for answers and IT person types words in on powerpoint slide
- ❖ As groups are ready they write their word on a whiteboard

OR

Option 2

Have the list of characteristics/attributes on a PPT slide and ask people to stand up and read the scripture if they have the one that corresponds/describes that characteristic. Choose one verse for each characteristic and use people from a wide range of age groups.

Some characteristics (attributes) of God

Eternal – Deuteronomy 33:27; Jeremiah 10:10; Psalm 90:2)

Infinite – Jeremiah 23:24; Psalm 102:25-27; Revelation 22:13; 1 Kings 8:22-27;

Omnipresent (present everywhere) – Psalm 139:7-12

Omnipotent (all powerful) – Genesis 18:14; Luke 18:27; Revelation 19:6

Omniscient (all knowing) – Psalm 139:2-6; Isaiah 40:13-14

Unchanging (immutable) – Psalm 102:25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12; 13:8

Sovereign – 2 Samuel 7:22; Isaiah 46:9-11

Wise – Proverbs 3:19; Romans 16:26-27; 1 Timothy 1:17

Holy – Leviticus 19:2; 1 Peter 1:15

Righteous and Just – Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 11:7; Psalm 119:137

Faithful – Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 89:1-8

Truth – Psalm 31:5; John 14:6; John 17:3; Titus 1:1-2

Good – Psalm 25:8; Psalm 34:8; Mark 10:18

Merciful – Deuteronomy 4:31; Psalm 103:8-17; Daniel 9:9; Hebrews 2:17

Gracious – Exodus 34:6; Psalm 103:8; 1 Peter 5:10

Love – John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:8

Spirit – John 4:24

Light – 1 John 1:5; Psalm 18:28

Triune (trinity) – Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14a

Shepherd – Psalm 23, John 10

Fortress – Psalm 181

Shield – Psalm 28:7

Song – Exodus 15:2

Creator – James 1:17-18

Small Group Activity - How do we know God?

Option 1 –Video Activity

This activity will be an ideal opportunity to practice intergenerational worship. Each group will need to include at least one person who has the means to make the video clip with them at the service.

You will need to give clear directions about the time available.

In small groups and make sure you have a video camera available (smart phone, iphone, ipad ect.) take a few minutes to discuss how you can discover who GOD is and then make a short video that expresses this. Be as creative as you want.

Some Questions to ask in the group to get discussion going are:

- ❖ Have you ever thought about what helps you to discover who God is? Think about this now and share with your group one experience where you have discovered something new about who GOD is. eg. This may have been a time where you have felt really close to God, during a hard time, a word of encouragement you have received from someone, through reading your bible, or revealed in nature.
- ❖ Make a list of the different ways we can know GOD.
- ❖ Discuss how can you express this visually in a video?

Option 2 - Low Tech option:

Discuss the questions above in small groups and have a sharing/testimony time back to the larger congregation.

Short Talk

Invite the children to come close to you while you speak. This will help you to engage with them and hear their responses as you speak.

We have thought a lot this morning about who God is. I wonder if you have learnt something important about God already today. I want to talk to you for a moment about three words that I think are very important about God.

1. **Forever** – Can you think of a time when you have felt sad about having to say “goodbye” to someone? [Allow for responses] Maybe you knew that it would be a while before you would see them again?

One of the most amazing things about God is that he is ‘forever’. We never have to say “goodbye” to him. We never have to be without him.

2. **Love** – what do you think ‘love’ means? [Allow for responses] I think that when we love someone we think about what they need, we protect them and we want to spend time with them. Can you think of someone who loves you? [Allow for responses]

1 John 4:8 says that “God is love”. Let’s say it together, “God is love”. This means that he always thinks about what we need, always protects us and always wants to be with us.

3. **Forgiving** – hands up if you think you are perfect! Is there anyone here that you think is perfect? We might think we are pretty perfect some days but all of us do wrong things sometimes. Because God loves us he has given us rules to live by. These rules keep us healthy and happy. But, because we are not perfect we sometimes choose not to live by God’s rules. When we break God’s rules it is important that we ask God to forgive us. God has promised that he will forgive us! No matter what we do, if we are really sorry, God will forgive us.

God is FOREVER. God is LOVE. God is FORGIVING. These things are very important to me about who God is. What’s most important to you about who God is?

Prayer Activity – How do we know God?

At the end of Psalm 46 the Bible tells us that one way to get to know God is to ‘Be Still’. Does anyone here have trouble being still? Just for a few minutes we are going to try and be very still. Of it helps, you can lie down, close your eyes and listen.

At the time that Psalm 46 was written, the countries all around them were at war. God said to his people, “Be still and know that I am God.”

Today we might not have wars happening around us but there are still things happening that upset and worry us, no matter how old or young we are.

When we are still and quiet we can think about who God is. Knowing who God is helps to take away the worry. He can make us strong, brave and calm.

Today we may not have physical wars happening around us but we have internal wars bidding for our attention and stealing our peace. If we take time out to listen to God’s call to ‘Be Still – and know that I am God’ we can understand the power and the peace he has for us today.

Nature is a great way to experience God the creator.

Today we are going to use our imaginations to go to a place where we can connect with God. Picture somewhere where you can relax, a beach with rolling waves, a river or a pond. See if you can spend some time at this place and slow your thoughts down and focus on God.



If you are finding your thoughts run off onto other things grab those thoughts and push them away. You might find it helpful to picture them floating or being washed away. If you are at a river picture the thoughts sitting on a leaf and floating down the river or at the beach picture the thoughts are being washed away etc.

If you have younger kids in your congregation it will be helpful to give them a leaf to hold or have a picture eg of a stream on ppt or paper to look at, explain to them they are going to have some quiet time to think about who God is while they sit with their grownups.