

ROOTED IN JESUS

JUNIOR

A COURSE IN CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP
FOR CHILDREN



Blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose trust is the Lord.

They shall be like a tree planted by water,
sending out its roots by the stream.

It shall not fear when heat comes,
and its leaves shall stay green;
in the year of drought it is not anxious,
and it does not cease to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17.7-8

ROOTED IN JESUS: Course contents

Rooted in Jesus Junior follows the first 6 modules of the adult course. Each module is printed in a separate booklet.

Book 1: What is a Christian?

Book 2: The Christian and the Holy Spirit

Book 3: Growing as a Christian

Book 4: Learning more about Jesus

Book 5: Developing a life of prayer

Book 6: Learning from the Bible



Introduction for the group leader

Children were very special to Jesus. Jesus himself came to earth as a child, born amongst domestic animals to an ordinary young woman and her carpenter husband. He loved children and talked about them in his teaching. Consider the following passages:

- **Mark 9.36-37**, where Jesus tells the disciples that anyone who welcomes a child welcomes Jesus himself
- **Mark 10.13-15**, where Jesus insists that the children should be brought to him and teaches that whoever does not receive the kingdom as a little child will never enter it.

To teach children is an important calling. When you teach a child to be a disciple of Jesus, you teach him the most important thing he will ever learn. When you teach many children, you influence a whole generation. To teach children is to shape the future of your village, your city and your nation. **Proverbs 22.6** says this: 'train children in the right way, and when they are old, they will not stray'.

If you are going to teach a group of children to follow Jesus, there are a number of things you will need to do.

- You must always prepare your lessons carefully. You need to know before you start what you are going to do in the lesson, how much time you plan to spend on each section, and what you will need to take with you.
- You must remember to pray for the children before the lesson and during the week.

The children do not need a book or a Bible; only you need this book, and a Bible. If you have other adults to help you it will make your task easier. If you want to spend time with the children before or afterwards praising God together, eating or drinking, or playing a game, that is good; some of the sessions are shorter than others, and this gives you an opportunity to spend more time on worship and other things. Always remember that the children should enjoy themselves - you are teaching them not just to understand or to behave well, but also how to think, love, laugh, and eventually lead.

Note: the course assumes that you are teaching a group of children in a school or in Sunday School, and that those children have parents who are Christians or sympathetic to the Christian faith. If there are things you are not sure about or for which you need additional support, always consult your pastor.

Rooted in Jesus Junior

Book 3: Growing as a Christian

Lesson 1a: Learning to pray

Introduction

Introduce yourself and any other adults involved in the lesson to the children and then welcome them to your class and the Rooted in Jesus Junior Programme.

Welcome game

Introduce the topic of prayer by asking the children to demonstrate different ways we communicate with each other. Put them into pairs to do this.

Eg: talking and listening; non verbal communication (a hug, a sulk); writing; drumming; text or phone etc.



Revision

Begin by asking the children if they can remember any of the memory verses from Book 2:

1 John 5.11-12

1 Corinthians 10.13

Galatians 5.22-23

1 John 1.8-9

Ask the children if any of them have had any new experiences of the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives that they would like to share from what they have been learning in Rooted in Jesus so far.

Explain to the children that up to now you have talked about our relationship with God, and that you will now begin to look at some practical aspects of the Christian life – prayer, fellowship and the Bible.

Then tell the children that this week you are going to learn about prayer. Explain that prayer is a way that Christians can communicate with God and it involves both talking to God and listening to him. God wants to speak to us! That's amazing!

Begin with a prayer, thanking God that through Jesus it is possible for us to come to him in prayer, and asking that he would send his Holy Spirit to be with us today and help us to begin to learn how to pray.

Beginning a life of prayer

Put the children in to small groups of 3 or 4. Remind them that God knows and loves each one of them (Book 1, lesson 1). Ask these questions:

- What are the things which you want to talk to God about? What do you want to ask him?
- Has anyone any experiences of answered prayer to share?

Memory verse

Bring them all back into the big group and introduce and learn the memory verse for this week which is **John 16.24**:



Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.
Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Ask the children: *What are the three things which John says in this verse?* Explain to the children that you are going to look at the first of these three things this week, and the other two next week.

1. 'Until now you have not asked for anything in my name.'

First of all, ask the children what they think it means to pray in the name of Jesus?

Now tell them: *I am going to read you a story from the Bible. Jesus was raised from the dead and he spent 40 days with the disciples. Then he went back to heaven, and sent his Holy Spirit to help them. This is the story of what happened after that.*



Read Acts 3.1-10

Ask the children: *By whose power it was that the man was healed?*

Answer – it was by the power of Jesus, and not by the power of Peter and John.

Explain that this is what it means to pray in the name of Jesus – it means to use his power. It's like the difference between using a bike (whose is the power?) and a motorbike.

Help the children to act out this scene so that they understand how astonishing it would have been to everyone involved. Choose two children to be Peter and John, one to be the lame man, and some the crowd. Ask the remaining children to be an audience – tell them to watch carefully, because they too have an important part.

Appoint yourself as narrator. As the children begin to act out the scene, stop them at intervals and ask questions of the audience to help them see how surprising the whole event was. Examples of questions you could ask are:

- What do you think the lame man felt like, lying outside the temple gate every day?
- What did he ask Peter and John for?
- What do you think Peter and John thought when they heard his request?
- What do you think they thought when he was healed? Were they surprised, do you think? Were they used to this happening?
- Why were the crowd following Peter and John?
- What do you think the crowd thought when the man was healed? Had they ever seen anything like this before?
- How do you think the crowd would react to this healing?

Now read **Acts 3.11-16** and tell the children in your own words what Peter said next.



Prayer focus

Ask the children to imagine that they suddenly had the power of a chief or a president. What difference would it make to them? Explain that when you become a Christian you suddenly have the power of Jesus. You can pray in his name.



Tell the children that the name of Jesus is a very powerful name. Encourage the children to believe that they can pray humbly and authoritatively in the name of Jesus and expect answers to their prayers.

Ask the children if anyone would like to share something that they would like Jesus to do for them. And then ask them if they believe that when we ask Jesus to help them, he will. Explain that the thing they ask for has to be something Jesus himself wants to do for them or through them, and that as we get to know Jesus better we gradually learn what kinds of things these are (you will talk more about this in a moment).

Then pray for that child – ask 2 or 3 children to gather round and lay their hands (gently) on him or her, then pray in the name of Jesus saying something like this:

In the name of Jesus and by the power of Jesus, be healed, or Jesus, I pray in your name and with your power that this person will receive the help that she needs.

Repeat this with other members of the group, and choose different children to say the prayer each time.

End with songs of praise.



This lesson is taken from *Rooted in Jesus* – a discipleship course for Africa, edited by Alison Morgan and supported by The Mathetes Trust. See www.rootedinjesus.net.