

## The Big Discussion Guide

### Creation Fest Big Weekend 2021

Welcome to the Creation Fest Big Discussion!

For the Creation Fest Big Weekend 2021, voices from across the world prepared talks to point us to Jesus and the hope that he brings. For each of the five streams we've gathered a number of questions, which can be reflected on individually, discussed in a group setting or used within a home group setting any time.

Our hope and prayer is that these seminar streams alongside the questions would resource your church, moving from simply a piece of presented content, to a narrative all can contribute towards and together we can all celebrate the good news of the God who loves us.

However you use these questions within your church community, here is a recommended format for the Big Discussion:

- Join together to watch the seminar stream content either in person or via an online platform such as ZOOM. Each of the seminar streams are made up of three videos covering various topics.
- Start by simply asking open initial questions which lead to more than just Yes/No answers: What did you all think of that talk? Was there something that specifically stood out to you?
- After each video, pause to discuss the questions for that specific video. The questions we've put together are simply ideas, so edit, change and tailor as you see fit, after all you know your context best!
- Progress through the questions. Rather than short answers, encourage your group to apply what they've heard, debate, share and process the content. Some in your group might not have fully understood what's been shared or have various questions after watching the videos.
- End in a time of prayer, before moving on to the next Creation Fest seminar stream.

Many of you engaging with this Big Discussion guide will have a wealth of experience in leading group discussions within your churches. But for those who haven't led discussions such as these before, we've put together ten top tips to help your time together be as fruitful as possible:

1. Host and guide the discussion like you would a discussion at a dinner party. Each discussion will look different depending on who is around the table; take initiative as one model doesn't fit all, as the leader you can see the need of the people in the room. Be led by the Spirit in your leadership of the discussion time, and take encouragement from Matthew 18:20.

2. Ask open questions: So not questions that just lead to 'yes and no' answers, but more questions which ask for opinion, like 'what do you think?'. Tee the questions up in a way that would be approachable to all in your group. If you have individuals relatively new in their faith, ensure your language suits and rephrase certain questions as needed.
3. Be encouraging. Some might be worried, or even nervous to contribute. Especially be encouraging when you don't agree with something that's shared, people are more likely to feel safe if they feel able to contribute in discussions. Win the person not simply the argument, affirm the person and link into further resources and/or discussion where needed.
4. Be yourself and be honest. As the leader of the discussion, if you're asked a question that you don't know the answer to then it's fine to say 'I'm not too sure, let me go back to you once I've spoken with someone who might know the answer'.
5. Don't answer all of the questions. Open it up to the group 'that's a great question, what does everyone else think', but there are exceptions .. if someone ask's, how many gospels are there or where is the toilet, just tell them rather than asking what the group think (!).
6. Don't be afraid of silence. Research suggests someone needs at least 7 seconds to think about an idea before answering, so if you ask one of the questions and you don't get a response .. wait. If you've waited 10+ seconds then perhaps this a good time to rephrase the question.
7. Rephrase the question. All process and interpret in different ways. Some are more analytical some are more reflective. For example the question what does forgiveness mean, some would respond better to the question have you ever had to forgive someone and how did it feel?
8. Encourage all to both contribute to the discussion and consume through learning from others. While all are invited to do both, try to cultivate the environment where nobody feels any pressure to have to share. If you're leading discussions with a group who don't know each-other well, it might be worth saying something at the start of the time together to encourage all to share only if they're comfortable to do so. If you're gathering as a large group, perhaps it might be best to view the seminar together but then break into smaller groups (with leaders) for the times of discussion.
9. Due to the nature of the topics covered within these seminars, we recommend that pastoral care is offered for any that would like further conversations around topic areas, to continue a discussion or to connect with the various organisations highlighted within the seminar streams.

10. These discussions are a celebration of the good news and should be FUN! Be conscious of the environment you're holding the discussions, someones home with food and drinks is likely to make people feel at ease and feel able to share freely rather than a strict classroom environment.

We've created this Creation Fest Big Discussion guide to be a resource for the local church all over the UK - we encourage you to embrace this opportunity to unpack the five Creation Fest seminar streams in your communities, to together experience the truth and wonder of Jesus.

We're praying for you and your church communities and look forward to hearing how these Big Discussions go.

Love,  
The Creation Fest team

## Seminar Stream

### The Big Picture: Future Church

*Pete Hughes*

*Mark Sayers*

*Jon Tyson*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### **Session one with Pete Hughes:**

Q: How would you explain holiness? Has what Pete shared today changed your view of the holiness we should pursue?

Q: Pete talks about gratitude being fundamental as it connects us back to the giver. How could you better practice gratitude?

Q: What would it look like for you to have a wholehearted allegiance to Jesus rather than to secular natives?

Q: Pete highlights a number of idols, including the idol of the freedom of choice and the idol of power. Can you think of any examples of these or other idols which have created unholy patterns of living in your life?

Q: What idols might you currently need to recognise, repent of and replace with wholehearted worship? In our call to holiness, how can we continually expose and strip back idols in our life?

Q: Read Joshua 3:5 & Psalm 24 out loud as a group and spend time meditating over them in prayer.

### **Session two with Mark Sayers:**

Q: Resilience is the ability to withstand pressure, even becoming more beautiful in the process. How would you view your personal level of resilience? Has this changed pre-pandemic to post-pandemic?

Q: Mark talks about retreating into the comfort zone, a place where we feel at comfort and ease because we've reduced what we can control. If you were to be honest, are you currently operating from the comfort zone?

Q: In the book of Habakkuk, we see a change in stance from Habakkuk questioning God, to him having a posture of resilience. After the last 18 months of the pandemic, would you say you've experienced a similar transition of posture? Perhaps you've gone one step further and now have a scout mindset which Mark speaks of?

Q: When we next face an opportunity to demonstrate resilience how can we focus on and apply the non-negotiable promises of scripture?

### **Session three with Jon Tyson:**

Q: Do you see the 'Us vs Them' culture that Jon talks about in the culture around you?

Q: Has your mindset of hospitality changed as a result of this session? What especially stuck out that you might not have thought about before?

Q: Jon maps out biblical hospitality as being an environment of welcome paired with a conversation of identity. Can you think of any examples in scripture where this biblical hospitality is also modelled?

## Seminar Stream

**The Big Ask: Finding Hope**  
*Andy Bannister*  
*Sam Allberry*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### **Session one with Andy Bannister (Finding hope in a world of suffering and loss):**

Q: During your experience of the pandemic across the last 18 months, have you experienced suffering and/or loss?

Q: Andy shares that as humans we tend to worship the wrong things, things which the pandemic has exposed as hopeless. Can you think of any examples of things you have worshiped, but that there is still a level of disappointment and need for more?

Q: What would you say to someone who believes that suffering disproves God? How can we best navigate the answer to this question?

Q: What would it look like for you to be more compassionate to those around you?

Q: When do you find it hardest to show compassion, and when do you find it easiest? Are there any themes amongst your answers?

### **Session two with Andy Bannister: (Are we matter or do we matter?):**

Q: How does the Christian worldview that everyone matters equally, affect how you treat others?

Q: We have a choice to adopt a Christian understanding of humanity, that we have real value and real dignity because we are made in Gods image, or we can reject that narrative. How does this decision change how we behave?

Q: What are the responsibilities we have to both our Christian and non-Christian brothers and sisters if we adopt that Christian understanding of humanity? Is there a difference in the responsibility we have towards other Christians and non-Christians?

Q: Andy discusses the story of Maximilian Kolbe and the value of human life. Read Romans 5:8 and discuss the significance if this is true.

Q: When speaking to non-Christian friends and family, do you find a discussion such as this simple or hard to navigate?

### **Session three with Sam Allberry:**

Q: Do you regularly have FOMO (the fear of missing out) and does it affect the decisions you make?

Q: In 2 Corinthians 5:1 we see Paul pointing to our bodies being temporary, like vulnerable tents, but that God has promised we will go from the tent of now to an eternal building. How can knowing this change where we look for hope today?

Seminar Stream	The Big Discussion Questions
<p><b>The Big Challenge: Mental Health</b>  <i>Kate Middleton</i>  <i>Will Van Der Hart</i>  <i>Rob Waller</i></p>	<p><b><u>Session one with Kate Middleton:</u></b></p> <p>Q: Kate Middleton unpacks some of the challenges she's faced over the last year, namely feeling like you're at the edge of your limit or even reaching that limit. Is this something you've recently felt or perhaps have come close to feeling?</p> <p>Q: In 1 Kings 18 &amp; 19, despite Elijah being a great leader, we see that he's not immune from feeling overwhelmed. He retreats to the desert and is left alone and vulnerable, he calls out to God saying 'I can't do this anymore'. When you've felt overwhelmed, are you more likely to retreat alone or retreat to others? Would you cry out to God in response or feel pressure to be 'fine'?</p> <p>Q: In the New Testament, we see Jesus very aware of his humanity and of his limits. We see him taking time out to rest and encouraging others to do so - modelling that our limits matter. Do you model in your everyday that your limits matter? What are some of your recently discovered limits?</p> <p>Q: Next time you feel close to your limit as a human, what are some of the ways that you can then turn to and draw from our limitless God?</p> <p>Q: Do you fear your limits? Has God given us limits to be fearful of them? When we reach the end of ourselves, reach our limit or come close to reaching it, it is not the end as we look to God.</p> <p><b><u>Session two with Will Van Der Hart:</u></b></p> <p>Q: Will Van Der Hart explains that the greatest challenge in belonging in leadership is how we are authentic in and with ourselves. Within your leadership, do you find it easier to demonstrate competence or vulnerability?</p> <p>Q: Have you ever felt fraudulent in your leadership and/or wider life as a son/daughter/husband/wife/friend/colleague etc.?</p> <p>Q: Shame propagates isolation. Are you currently operating from a state of shame or a state of belonging?</p> <p>Q: In Exodus 4:1, God calls Moses to go back into Egypt to liberate the Israelites, with Moses's response being 'What if the Israelites don't believe me?', fearful of his humiliation/shame. What have you found to be your natural response when God has called you to something?</p> <p>Q: For us to feel a sense of true belonging Will challenges us to (1) accept our limitations, (2) welcome our uniqueness and (3) lead out of our vulnerability. Which of these challenges do you feel is most achievable, which are you going to find the most challenging?</p> <p>Q: How might you be able to encourage those around you not to gather around your competencies but instead gather around the truth that the whole is greater than that sum of its parts? Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 and discuss how as a result we're called to operate as a church.</p>

Seminar Stream	The Big Discussion Questions
<p><b>The Big Topics</b>  <i>Bishop. Philip Mounstephen</i>  <i>Dominic Done</i>  <i>Cheryl Brodersen</i></p>	<p><b><u>Session one with Bishop. Philip Mounstephen:</u></b></p> <p>Q: Bishop Philip shared about the current state of the persecuted church. Did anything he communicate surprise you?</p> <p>Q: Has anyone in the group either been persecuted for your faith or known of someone who has? If so and if you feel comfortable, share with the group.</p> <p>Q: The report argues that the time for inaction and indifference towards the persecuted church is over. What part could you play in supporting the persecuted church?</p> <p>Q: Spend some time praying for the global church, focussing on our brothers and sisters who have been persecuted for their Christian faith.</p> <p><b><u>Session two with Dominic Done:</u></b></p> <p>Q: Have you ever been through a season of doubt? Would you say you have ever idolised your doubts?</p> <p>Q: Have you ever accommodated your theology to fit your choices and/or your lifestyle?</p> <p>Q: Dominic shares how doubt is actually often healthy, but it can either lead to faith or lead to unbelief - we see examples of both in scripture and history. Do you see patterns of healthy doubt in your own walk with Jesus?</p> <p>Q: Spend some time reflecting on what Dominic shared, that those who have the strongest faith often have the strongest doubt. That you doubt only because you first believed. What outlook should you have next time you or someone you know have doubts?</p> <p>Q: If any in the group have shared that they currently have doubt/s, spend some time in prayer, bringing those doubts to Jesus.</p> <p><b><u>Session three with Cheryl Brodersen:</u></b></p> <p>Fear is infectious, addictive and controlling. Read Mark 4:35-41 and comment on how this is true.</p> <p>Q: How would you answer Jesus' question "Why are you afraid?"</p> <p>Q: In what way does Jesus' question "Do you still have no faith?" reveal the core of your fears?</p> <p>Q: When the Bible talks about faith, it is not about making ourselves believe something. The Bible talks about the object of our faith, Jesus. What did Cheryl share with you about the person, work and plans of Jesus?</p>

Seminar Stream	The Big Discussion Questions
<p><b>The Big Topics</b> <i>Bishop. Philip Mounstephen</i> <i>Dominic Done</i> <i>Cheryl Brodersen</i></p>	<p><b><u>Session three (continued):</u></b></p> <p>Because Jesus is with us in our boat, we have the ability and privilege of calling on Him in everything.</p> <p>Q: What does the Bible say will happen when we put Philipians 4:6-7 into practice?</p> <p>Are we fearful, anxious, easily upset with people, feeling that God does not care? It is a symptom of a need for faith.</p> <p>Q: According to 2 Timothy 1:7, what has God NOT given us? What has He given us?</p> <p>The Bible tells us who Jesus is, His character and His personal care and ministry to people.</p> <p>Q: What remedy for fear are we given in Romans 10:17?</p> <p>No matter what we are going through, remember God always has a plan. Prayer and the Word of God align us and reveal to us the plans of God.</p> <p>Q: How does Romans 8:35-38 and Hebrews 7:25 confirm this to you?</p> <p>Q: In conclusion, comment on this definition of faith: "Faith is believing in the person of Jesus, our hope. Faith is believing in what Jesus has done for us. Faith is believing in the good plans and the power of Jesus. Faith is entrusting ourselves to Jesus."</p>



## Seminar Stream

### The Big Story: Reading the Bible *Andrew Ollerton*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### Session one - Origins: Where have we come from?:

Q: The film you watched was shot in the beautiful Brecon Beacons. Talk about some of the most beautiful locations you have visited, or would like to visit one day.

Watch the film (approx. 30mins)

Q: What's your immediate reaction to the film you've just watched? What resonated or struck a chord with you?

Read Genesis 1:1-10

Andrew offers three tips to help us read the book of Genesis:

- It's more about the why than the how questions
- It's written for us, but it wasn't written to us
- Read the beginning in the light of the end

Q: Which of these principles seems most helpful for reading Genesis today and why?

Q: If you enjoy a beautiful garden or taste great food, you assume there is a gardener or a great chef involved. When you look at the design and beauty of the world, how can it draw you to a greater sense of wonder and worship?

Read Genesis 1:26-31

Q: Our origins story in Genesis gives dignity and worth to each person on the planet. What are the great dangers for our society if we lose this theological perspective?

Andrew speaks about the three key purposes of humanity:

Purpose 1 - to know God

Purpose 2 - to enjoy good relationships with others

Purpose 3 - to steward the world in a sustainable way

Q: In what ways do you think humanity has both succeeded and failed at these?

Read: Genesis 3:1-9

Q: The world is so beautiful and so broken - how does Genesis 1-3 help explain these realities that we experience in the world today?

Q: What was lost as a result of the fall of humanity? What are the consequences that we still live with today?

## Seminar Stream

**The Big Story: Reading the Bible**  
*Andrew Ollerton*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### **Session one (continued):**

Read: Genesis 3:15

Q: In the next film, we will hear more Jesus, but how does this mysterious verse point forward and declare hope over our broken world?

To finish:

Q: Overall, how has this origins story in Genesis helped you make sense of life today?

### **Session two - Rescue: Who can save us?:**

Q: Have you ever been rescued? Tell your stories and experiences - from being lost, stranded or helped by someone in a time of need.

Watch the film (approx. 30mins)

Q: What's your immediate reaction to the film you've just watched? What resonated or struck a chord with you?

Read: John 1:1-4, 14

Q: The opening words of John's gospel remind us that Jesus was there at the beginning with the Father. What other echoes can you spot with the origins story in Genesis?

Q: The Word became flesh (v14), the author writes himself into the plot line. Having seen the film, how would you summarise why Jesus came to rescue us?

Read: Luke 4:16-19

Q: At his baptism (Luke 3:2-22), Jesus was loved by the Father and filled with the Holy Spirit. Why might this have been significant before he began his ministry? How does this speak to us today?

Q: Recall some of the most famous stories, events and miracles during the ministry of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. Which means the most to you and why?

Read: John 19:28-30

Q: How would you respond to the question: 'If Jesus was so good, why did he die like a criminal?'

## Seminar Stream

### The Big Story: Reading the Bible *Andrew Ollerton*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### Session two (continued):

Q: The cross has become the globally recognised symbol of the Christian faith. How does this symbol of torture and execution reveal the extend of God's love for us?

Read: John 21:4-13

Q: What difference did the resurrection of Jesus make for Peter and his life? What difference does it still make for us today?

Q: Overall, how has this theme of rescue through Jesus helped you understand the Bible better and make sense of life today?

### Session three - Hope: Where are we headed?:

Q: What hopes do you have for the future: Do you have any ambitions, goals or things you would like to do or achieve?

Watch the film (approx. 15 mins)

Q: What's your immediate reaction to the film you've just watched? What resonated or struck a chord with you?

Read: 1 Peter 1:3-7

Q: What's the difference between wishful thinking and the Bible's idea of a hope? In what way is our hope a 'living hope' because of Jesus?

Read: Revelation 21:1-5

Q: The Book of Revelation links back to Genesis. Paradise lost is regained. How do you imagine the future world that awaits us?

In eternity, Andrew mentions three things that Revelation reveals about the future:

- Restoration of the planet
- Resurrection bodies that no longer get sick, sin or die
- Reunion with God and with those who have gone before us

Q: What are you most looking forward to and why?

Read: Romans 8:31-19

Q: Despite life's uncertainties and challenges, what difference should our hope make to the way we live and serve God in the world?

## Seminar Stream

**The Big Story: Reading the Bible**  
*Andrew Ollerton*

## The Big Discussion Questions

### Session three (continued):

To finish:

Q: Overall, how has this theme about hope helped you make sense of life today?

Q: How has this Wild Bible series inspired you? What are the main things that you will take with you?

Create a time of worship and prayer.

You might like to finish by reading this prayer (widely attributed to St. Patrick):

*I arise today  
Through God's strength to pilot me;  
God's might to uphold me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's ear to hear me,  
God's word to speak for me,  
God's hand to guard me,  
God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
God's hosts to save me  
Afar and near,  
Alone or in a multitude.*

*Christ shield me today  
Against wounding  
Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in the eye that sees me,  
Christ in the ear that hears me.*

*I arise today  
Through the mighty strength  
Of the Lord of creation.*

<b>Seminar Stream</b>	<b>The Big Discussion Questions</b>
<p><b>The Big Story:</b> Reading the Bible <i>Andrew Ollerton</i></p>	<p>Finally, thank you for watching the Wild Bible series created by Bible Society. We hope these films have inspired you to read the Bible. You might like to check out the following resources for you and your church:</p> <p><b>The Bible Series: Experience a better story</b></p> <p>Host a 7-part journey through the big story of the Bible for your whole church. The Bible Series includes lots of free resources - powerful testimony films, sermon resources, small group films and discussion guide, youth film series, Spoken Word films and a series book by Andrew Ollerton:</p> <p>Visit: <a href="https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/the-bible-series/">https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/the-bible-series/</a></p> <p><b>Bible Trek: Discover the sites. Experience the stories</b></p> <p>Join Andrew Ollerton as he treks through the Holy Land and beyond. Through a series of short films, you can discover the sites where famous Bible events took place, from Hezekiah's Tunnel to the home town of Jesus.</p> <p>Visit: <a href="https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/bible-trek/">https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/bible-trek/</a></p> <p>Or search for our Bible Trek channel on YouTube</p> <p><b>The Bible Course</b></p> <p>The Bible Course will increase your confidence, equip you to read the Bible better and help you to see its relevance to daily life. This eight session, video-led course, presented by Andrew Ollerton, will help you to understand the big picture of the world's bestselling book.</p> <p>Visit: <a href="https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-bible-course/">https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/the-bible-course/</a></p>