



## SESSION 4: CAN YOU BE GOOD WITHOUT GOD?



### Aim

To explore how we decide what makes someone good or bad, and whether that is relevant to knowing God.



### Starter

See page 4 for cards to use for this activity. One by one, go through the cards and after a group discussion place them on a scale that ranges from good to bad.

Once you have done this give more information for some of the cards and ask if the group would change where the card goes on the scale. Examples:

- ◆ The murderer was a woman who killed her husband after he had abused her for 20 years
- ◆ The boy who helped at home did his brother's chores so that he could get the pocket money instead
- ◆ The person who lied to their close friend told them they really suited a shaved head after they shaved off their waist length hair for charity

We all have different views on what is good and bad.



### Video

Watch the video [Can you be good without God?](#) (Running time 4:06)



### Questions

Encourage pupils to write any questions on sticky notes as they occur to them.

Answer questions of understanding about the video straight away unless these will be answered later in the session. If there is not time for a question, confirm you will answer it another time. Consider using the 'car park' so pupils know you will not forget.



### Exploring the Bible

In his biography of Jesus' life, Mark records this incident. Read Mark 3:1-6.

The religious people in the synagogue and the Pharisees were considered good people. They kept all the rules, which included those about the Sabbath. For the Jewish people the Sabbath was a day of rest – a day to set work aside, to focus on God and enjoy his creation.

But these very 'good' people took those rules so seriously, they would not let anybody do *anything* on the Sabbath, just in case they broke the rules. They waited to accuse Jesus of being a bad person for healing a man with an injured hand on the day of rest. When he did so, they plotted to kill him. These people had all the appearance of being good, but were they?

### Discuss

The religious leaders keep all the rules and do lots of good things. Yet look at Jesus' reaction to them when they accuse him of healing the man's hand. **What is Jesus' assessment of these religious leaders?**

*Jesus is not only keen for people to do good things. He is also interested in their inner motivations. The religious leaders are hypocrites because their motives for doing good are bad. Our outward behaviour is not what makes us good or bad, it is what is inside.*

Jesus develops this theme later in Mark's biography. Read Mark 7:20-23.

Jesus teaches that what is inside a person makes them good or bad. We all like to think of ourselves as good, but in Jesus' list here are things we all do – being jealous of others, being greedy, being nasty about other people. By Jesus' standard, we are all bad.

### Discuss

It sounds very offensive for Jesus to say all people are bad. **What do you think of the Idea that people cannot be good enough for God?**

*Encourage the pupils to think about what it would mean for everyone to be good enough for God. If God lowered his standards what would that mean for justice? It might be fine to be 'let off' your own wrongdoing, but how would you feel if you were the one wronged?*

In the video Andy Bannister explained that although God does not think people are good enough, God has a solution to that.

'For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:45 NIV)

Here, the Son of Man is a title for Jesus. God is sending Jesus to earth to die and give his life in a swap. People will get Jesus' goodness, and Jesus will get the punishment for their badness.

### Discuss

People were offended when Jesus said they were bad – yet now we see he is prepared to die for them. **What do you think of that?**

**How do you react to Andy Bannister's statement in the video that God is not actually that interested in whether people do good or bad things?**



### **Reflection**

Allow a time of reflection that is most appropriate to your group.

You may wish to consider what you heard about Jesus today using these prompts:

- ◆ How do I feel about who I am on the inside?
- ◆ What would make someone who thinks people are bad want to die for them?

Alternatively, an active response could be made by group members completing these statements on card to take away:

- I think what makes a person good or bad is...
- If I could ask God one question it would be...



### **Further resource**

**321** by Speaklife is a short video that teaches about who Jesus is and how he deals with sin and wrongdoing.



## Starter Activity Cards



Running ahead of a person with visual impairment so you get the last seat on the bus	Helping an old granny over the road
Murder	Hacking your mate's social media account and posting a fake crush
Teasing someone because they are ginger	Doing something to help at home
Not sharing your box of Miniature Heroes	Forgetting to feed your hamster
Not sharing your jelly babies	Forgetting to feed your little sister
Telling your parent / carer you love them	Lying to a close friend