

Fear of the Unknown

Session aims:

(For Christian young people)

To explore how fear of the unknown can stop us saying 'Yes' to God
To continue planning a specific, guest-friendly activity for Week 3

Session aims:

(For non-Christian young people)

To invite and encourage non-Christian young people to explore how, like Mary, trusting in God can help us with our fears of the unknown

Bible passages:

Luke 1:26–45
Joshua 1:9
Isaiah 41:10
Matthew 1:18–25

Preparation for you:

SHINE is a three-week programme comprising two teaching and planning sessions followed by one 'guest-friendly' session. (Watch the *How 2 SHINE* video to find out more.)

You will find it helpful to pre-watch the film you are going to use in your *Connecting* section during Weeks 1 and 2, and to think and pray a bit yourself about the kind of SHINE activity that might be best in the school you are working in. We have also produced two short videos for you to use in Week 3. These include some well known Christian musicians (including Rend Collective) talking about the difference that Jesus makes to their lives. These videos are designed to be a discussion starter for your Week 3 event and to make it even easier to share Jesus with the young people who come to any event you decide to organise. You can also download a PDF of easy-to-run Week 3 ideas.

Base Camp activities:

If your young people have little or no church background, or very little knowledge of the Bible, then you might want to use the **Base Camp activities** and corresponding films. These activities are specially tailored to enable those who are less familiar with Christianity to engage with the Bible. The Bible is still at the heart of these activities, but the way in which it is used is intended to be more accessible.

Base Camp content is distinct in a very important way, in that it emphasises *exploring* more about Jesus with others rather than being *equipped* to share the gospel from a position of having already committed to follow Christ.

SchoolsLive:

All of these activities are also available to download for free from the SchoolsLive website: (<http://www.schoolslive.org>)

Way in – options to start your session (choose one or two of these activities)

What's in the bag?

Time: 5–10 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: a large box or bag, three small prizes (optional) and several items that have different textures, sizes and shapes (eg something furry, something sharp (but safe!!), something squidgy, something cold)

- 1 Introduce this activity by saying that the fear of the unknown can be very real and very scary.
- 2 Ask for three volunteers who are feeling very brave today. Explain that all they have to do is place their hand into the box or bag and say what they think is in there.
- 3 Ask the volunteers to leave the room and then show the first item to the rest of the group and place it in the box or bag. Ask them to really play along and make out that what is in the bag or box is really nasty and scary. Lots of 'ooohs', 'uuuuhs', 'noooooos' will really help to create an exciting atmosphere. The more over the top, the better!
- 4 Ask the first volunteer to come back into the room and ask them to put their hand into the box or bag and say what they think is in there, while everyone else makes suitable noises and expressions.
- 5 Repeat for the other two volunteers and give each volunteer a prize, if you have chosen to give one.
- 6 Introduce the film you are about to show, and explain that fear of the unknown can be really scary and can stop us from thriving or taking risks.

Would you rather?

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: resource sheet: Would you rather?

- 1 Explain that you are going to read out a series of 'Would you rather?' questions, and for each one they have to decide which option they would choose. If you have lots of space, you could ask them to move to different ends of the room depending on their choice.
- 2 Read out a selection of statements from resource sheet: Would you rather?.
- 3 Make the point that some of the choices they have just made were hard because they involved an element of uncertainty – and the fear of the unknown can be scary. This is what this week's video is all about.

Scary words?

Time: 5 mins

Bible knowledge: n/a

With: an inflatable hammer or similar, a list of words

- 1 Play a word association game where volunteers take it in turns saying words linked to or associated with the last one spoken (for example, frog, tadpole, baby and so on). Play with two volunteers kneeling down facing each other. Explain that if they fail to answer, or take longer than three seconds to answer, they will be hit on the head with an inflatable hammer or similar.
- 2 Start each round by providing the first word. Use any words for the first few rounds, but make sure that the last two you use are 'fear' and 'unknown'.
- 3 Introduce the film you are about to show and explain that they will hear about a young woman called Mary who showed enormous trust in God, despite her fears of the unknown.

Connecting – Options to explore the theme (choose one of these activities)

Fear of the unknown

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Some

With: *Christian Week 2* video and the means to show it

- 1 To access the videos, follow these steps:
 - a) Login or register on the SHINE in schools website (www.shineinschools.com).
 - b) Click on the 'The Videos' tab.
 - c) Answer the three questions and click the 'CLICK HERE FOR YOUR VIDEOS' button to access the videos.
 - d) If you won't have access to the internet during your session you will need to download the videos – see the instructions on the bottom of the videos page.
- 2 Show the video to your group.

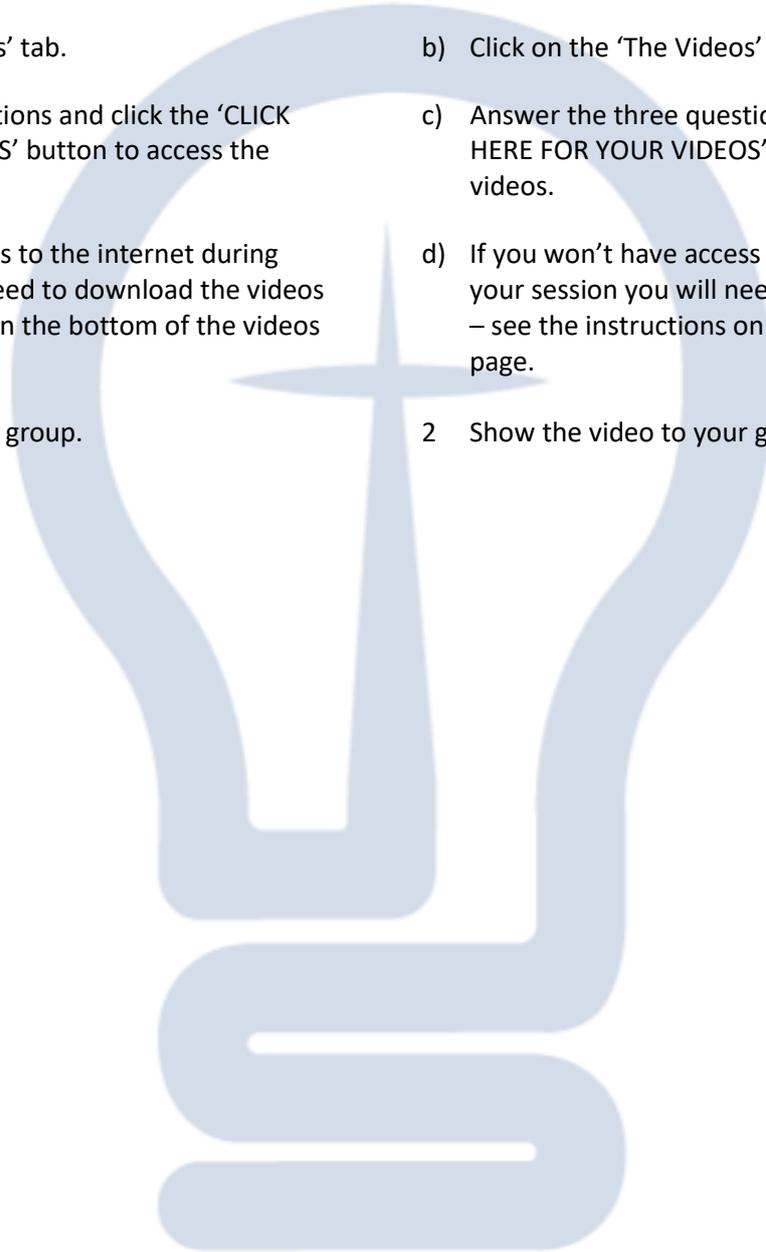
Base Camp: Fear of the unknown

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Limited

With: *Non-Christian Week 2* video and the means to show it

- 1 To access the videos, follow these steps:
 - a) Login or register on the SHINE in schools website (www.shineinschools.com).
 - b) Click on the 'The Videos' tab.
 - c) Answer the three questions and click the 'CLICK HERE FOR YOUR VIDEOS' button to access the videos.
 - d) If you won't have access to the internet during your session you will need to download the videos – see the instructions on the bottom of the videos page.
- 2 Show the video to your group.



Responding – Options to consider the next step (choose one or two of these activities)

Stepping out of fear – part 2

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Some

With: a flip chart or whiteboard and suitable pens, brightly coloured sticky notes, pens

- 1 Briefly recap on the film's message by explaining that it's now time for the group to continue to think and pray about how they can help their friends at school explore more about Jesus.
- 2 Work together as a whole group to come up with your detailed project plan, so nothing is forgotten and you are ready to do something to SHINE in your school next week. If you are still short of ideas, don't forget about the Week 3 ideas PDF and Week 3 ideas video (both available on the 'How does it work?' tab on the Shine website).
- 3 Write up each area you need to think about, one at a time on the flip chart, and lead a discussion to make sure you all know what's happening and who needs to do what:
 - Who are we aiming to reach?
 - What are we aiming to tell them/show them?
 - Will we use the film (Week 3) and, if so, what do we need to screen it?
 - What exactly are we going to do?
 - When is it going to happen?
 - If it's an event, how are we going to tell people about it?
 - Is there any special equipment we need?
 - Is there anyone we need to involve or invite to help us?
 - Do we need to seek permission from anyone or tell anyone what we are hoping to do?
 - Who needs to do what to make all this possible?
- 4 Give each person two sticky notes:
 - On the first one, invite them to write down the details they need to remember and pray for, especially if they have action points against their name!
 - On the second one, ask them to write down the name of the person they are hoping to invite. Encourage them to keep praying for this person before and after – whatever their answer. Make sure they

know that, if they struggle to issue their invite, God still loves them.

- 5 Allow time for the group to honestly share how they are feeling about doing this activity or event, and inviting their friends. Close in prayer, asking for God's strength to help you all to SHINE for him in your school.

Saying 'Yes' to God

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Some

With: sheets of paper, pens, Bibles

- 1 Briefly recap together what the video was about.
- 2 Split the group into smaller groups of four or five and ask them to write down some of the situations in which they find it hard to say 'Yes' to God. (For example: when asked about their faith, when out with their friends, when they think God is asking them to do something hard.)
- 3 Give out Bibles and ask them to look up the following passages:
 - a) Luke 1:26–38
 - b) Joshua 1:9
- 4 Still in smaller groups, discuss what the passages are saying about how we can overcome the fear of the unknown and say 'Yes' to God. Possible answers include: knowing that God is with us; asking friends to pray for us; asking God to give us the words to say; asking God for courage; seeking out those God has sent to help us; remember that God loves us.
- 5 Close the session by reminding everyone of the challenge in the video to go and start a conversation with their friends about Jesus, and to remember that God is with them.

Base Camp: Planning your exploration party – part 2

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Limited

With: a flip chart or whiteboard and suitable pens, brightly coloured sticky notes, pens

- 1 Begin by recapping the video.

- 2 Now work together as a whole group to come up with your detailed project plan, so nothing is forgotten and you are ready to SHINE in your school next week. If you are still short of ideas, don't forget about the Week 3 ideas PDF and Week 3 ideas video (both available on the 'How does it work?' tab on the Shine website).
- 3 Write up each area you need to think about, one at a time on the flip chart, and lead a discussion to make sure you all know what's happening and who needs to do what:
 - Who are we aiming to reach?
 - What are we aiming to tell them/show them?
 - Will we use the film (Week 3) and, if so, what do we need to screen it?
 - What exactly are we going to do?
 - When is it going to happen?
 - If it's an event, how are we going to tell people about it?
 - Is there any special equipment we need?
 - Is there anyone we need to involve or invite to help us?
 - Do we need to seek permission from anyone or tell anyone what we are hoping to do?
 - Who needs to do what to make all this possible?
- 4 Give each person a sticky note and invite them to write down the details they need to remember, especially if they have action points against their name!
- 5 Finally, ask them to think if there is a friend they could invite to next week's event. This would provide an opportunity for them to explore with you what Christians believe about how much we each need Jesus, and how much he values each of us beyond price.

Base Camp: In Mary's shoes

Time: 10 mins

Bible knowledge: Limited

With: sheets of paper, pens, Bibles

- 1 Briefly recap the message of the video.
- 2 Split into groups of about three or four and give each group a Bible or a printout of Luke 1:26–38.
- 3 Ask them to discuss the following questions:
 - List everything we know about Mary from this passage.
 - What does God ask her to do?
 - Why might this be really hard for her?
 - In spite of her fear of the unknown, what does she say to God's messenger?
 - It is unlikely you will be asked to have God's baby (!), but how might you respond if you thought that God was asking you to do something really difficult?
- 4 At the end of the video we heard these words: 'So don't worry, because I am with you. Don't be afraid because I am your God. I will make you strong and I will help you. I will support you with my right hand that saves you' (Isaiah 41:10). Ask the group to quietly think about what difference it would make to the things they are fearful of, knowing that God really is with them and wants to help them.

FEARLESS

Would you rather:

- 1 Always be too hot or always be too cold?
- 2 Eat your favourite food for every meal for the rest of your life or never eat your favourite food ever again?
- 3 Be really rich but have no friends or be poor but have loads of friends?
- 4 Be able to see into the future or change one event in the past?
- 5 Crawl everywhere or hop everywhere?
- 6 Never be able to wash your clothes or never have a shower or bath – ever again?
- 7 Only be able to listen to a playlist of your favourite ten songs for the rest of your life or only be able to listen to a playlist selected by other people?
- 8 Eat cold porridge or melted ice cream?
- 9 Only do the same, brilliant things every Saturday for the rest of your life, or allow someone else to choose different things to do each Saturday for the rest of your life?
- 10 Go to school for 12 hours a day for 3 days a week and have a 4-day weekend or leave things as they are?
- 11 Have two really good friends or 50 OK friends?
- 12 See in the dark or see round corners?
- 13 See into the future and know what you'll be doing in one years' time or see into the future and know what you'll be doing in 20 years' time?
- 14 Let someone else pick your GCSE / A level subjects or let someone else decide which school you go to?