

The Great Bog Misery

SESSION TWO



SESSION TWO

Outline: The Great Bog Misery

WHAT CAN WE REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

(Use and show list from flipchart from last time, but let the group answer some of the questions first)

SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP

CONTINUE OUR STORY

DRAMA: THE GREAT BOG MISERY

(Show picture of Faithful reaching out to rescue Christian when the Newscaster is doing the interviews)

ON WITH THE NEXT PART OF THE STORY.... after Faithful rescues Christian

QUESTIONS: *(list the questions on flipchart beforehand)*

LIST THE AWFUL THINGS ABOUT THE BOG

CONTINUE TELLING THE STORY

CONCLUSION: What do you think we can learn from all of this?

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The great thing is not to give up, go back to the Straight and Narrow Way and keep going straight.

Have a **suitable prayer**, if appropriate, to draw the afternoon to a close.

FOR YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE:

Some Bible verses to help you stay on the right path

Keep each session stimulating and moving as quickly as possible, and remember to keep it light hearted and lots of fun.

PREPARE BEFOREHAND:

Read session two notes and chapter 2 of the book.

List the main points of the story you want to bring out.

Print off drama and distribute to the helpers you have asked to take part.

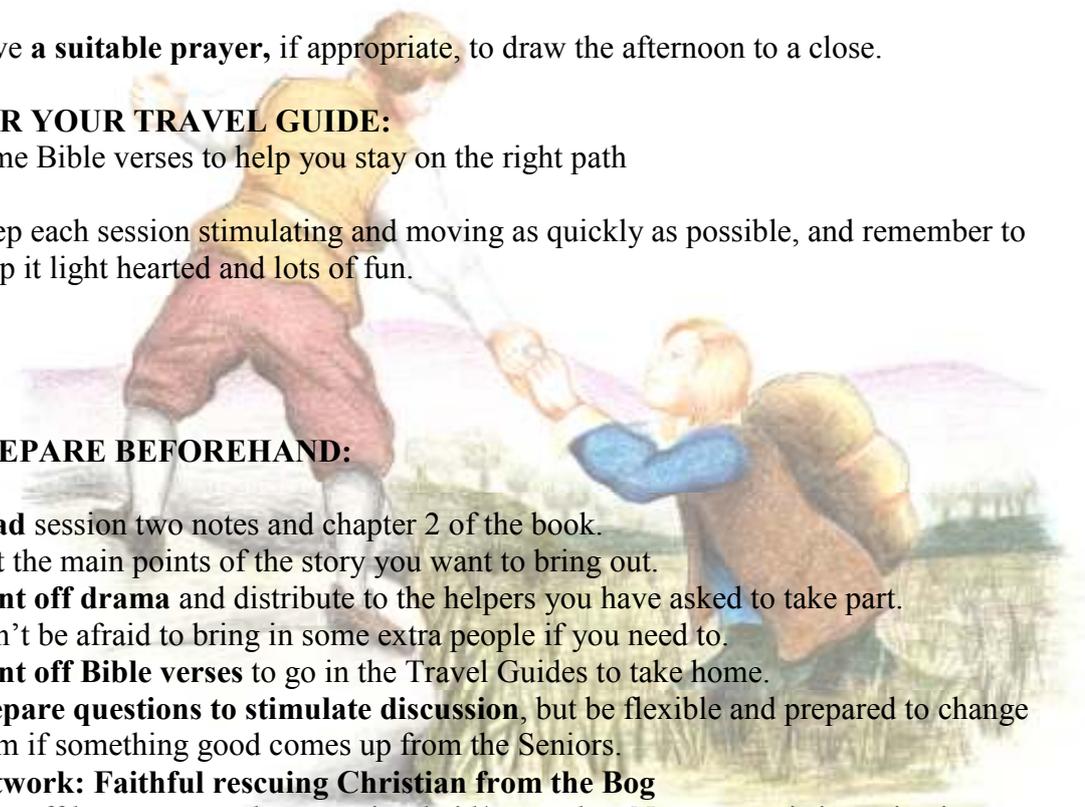
Don't be afraid to bring in some extra people if you need to.

Print off Bible verses to go in the Travel Guides to take home.

Prepare questions to stimulate discussion, but be flexible and prepared to change them if something good comes up from the Seniors.

Artwork: Faithful rescuing Christian from the Bog

Print off large copy and use as visual aid/prop when Newscaster is interviewing Christian and Faithful.



Session Two: The Great Bog Misery

WHAT CAN WE REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

(Use and show list from flipchart from last time, but let the group answer some of the questions first)

SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP:

Can anyone remember from where Christian was escaping?

(The City of Destruction)

Where was he going?

(The City of Gold)

He was carrying some things with him - what were they?

(Knapsack, Scroll, Guidebook)

All of these you could see – anything else?

(Key)

Can you name any of the people Christian met in Session One?

(Mr Bendy, Mr Ob Stinate and a Stranger, later called the Preacher)

Can you remember any of the challenges Christian faced?

What about the title of our last session? *(The Great Escape)*

CONTINUE OUR STORY:

Last session we left Christian floundering in the bog, frightened and feeling he was done for.

Oh... hold on a moment.... I have a news report coming through!

(Hold a mobile phone to your ear and pretend a short conversation)

I'll pass you on to our outside broadcaster who is reporting on some trouble with a mysterious bog.

(Drama)

SESSION TWO

DRAMA: THE GREAT BOG MISERY

Cast: Newsreader 1, Newsreader 2, Christian and Faithful

Props: Knapsack, Scroll and Guidebook

(Use picture of Faithful helping Christian out of the bog as a backdrop)

Newsreader 1:

Good afternoon to you - This is the News *(name your group)*
at *(time)*

My name is and I am reporting to you from*(name your town)*

We have had some reports of trouble with a mysterious bog that is situated just off the Straight and Narrow Way, which I believe is part of the Pilgrim Way.

I understand travellers need only to slightly lose their way to find themselves in deep trouble, floundering and being sucked into a bog of sorrow and misery.

Apparently there have been lots of Pilgrims who have come to grief here.
Let's go over to our outside reporter, *(name)*, who is near the spot.

Newsreader 2:

Good afternoon – I have my feet firmly planted on the Straight and Narrow Way near where this mysterious bog is claimed to be. I cannot see it very well from where I am standing.

I have heard that the King sends cartloads of hardcore down here every day for tipping into the bog. Things like advice, wisdom, experience, old heads, visions, books, saints, art, and parables....twenty thousand cartloads so far....but the bog just swallows it all up and continues to grow.

Newsreader 1:

Apparently all the doubts and fears, the misgivings and worries of the world trickle down into it. Is there really nothing the King can do about it?

Newsreader 2:

Apparently not! It's a natural phenomenon. Even as I speak to you, I have seen cartloads rattling down the hill on the far side of the bog every few minutes, laden with what appears to be stone statues, oil paintings in heavy gilt frames, whole libraries of books and the rubble of ruined buildings as well as any amount of beautiful marble – all dumped in the hope it will turn the bog into solid ground. I understand, too, the King pours in advice, wisdom and experience.

Newsreader 1:

Does it seem to have any effect?

Newsreader 2:

None at all! There is so much putrid slurry running off the fields that the bog continues to bubble like a stew-pot and never gets any smaller. It's a bad state of affairs and one I would not wish to investigate further.

This is *(name)* reporting for the.... *(name your group)* news....now back to..... in the studio.

Newsreader 1:

Worrying indeed! I have here in the studio, Christian, a Pilgrim who recently got stuck in the bog and was lucky to escape with his life. He's here with his friend and rescuer, Faithful. Christian, can you tell us a little about your ordeal?

Christian:

It's hard to tell you exactly....it all happened so suddenly....I was taken unawares.

I was with my friend, Mr Bendy – well, I thought he was my friend. We were jogging along, chatting as we went. The land ahead was very green against the darker fields and forests and we were busy enjoying the view.

Suddenly, it became springy and damp underfoot and, before we knew it, we were knee deep in the bog which was sucking at our boots and dragging us in deeper and deeper. Because of the Knapsack on my back, I was unable to get back on my feet and out of the bog.

Mr Bendy was no help to me and seemed to hold me responsible for having got him into this mess although he was able to get out of it, as he had no pack on his back to hold him down.

But he wouldn't help me and soon disappeared. I expect he decided to go back from where he had come.

I felt such desolation and disappointment. After all, I had only come such a short way....and here I was....completely defeated.

It seemed that my hope of ever reaching the City of Gold was gone forever.

Newsreader 1:

Disappointing indeed....how awful for you.

Christian:

It certainly was. Each time I reached the edge, the quagmire dragged me back. I cried out for help. My eyes were blinded by my tears and the slurry was up to my ears. I was doomed. I was done for. I certainly could not make it on my own.

Newsreader 1:

So tell us what happened.

Christian:

Suddenly I heard a voice say to me, "Here give me your hand", and through the blur of my tears, I could only just make out a tall figure standing over me. I reached out to him, but my fingers were so slippery and I was so full of misery I couldn't quite reach him. I cried out, "I can't do it! Leave me! I'm a lost man!"

Newsreader 1: *(says to the audience)*

May I introduce you to Faithful. It was he who rescued Christian.

(Then he turns to Faithful and directs these questions to him)

How were you able to help him? Didn't you get sucked into the bog too?

Faithful:

I was OK because I was standing on firm ground. I was able to grab him by the collar of his coat and drag him out.

(Faithful continues)

I am a new Pilgrim myself, but I had read in the Guidebook about this bog and how dangerous it was, so I was looking out for it.

There are patches of safe ground, like stepping stones, right across the bog. They are shown on the map in this Guidebook which I used to take us back to the Straight and Narrow Way.

Newsreader 1:

Lucky for Christian that you were passing.

Faithful:

I was glad to be of help.

Newsreader 1:

Thank you gentlemen – I am so glad it turned out as it did.

(Newsreader turning to the audience)

I wonder how many others are stuck in the bog?

That is all for now – a very good afternoon to you – this is *(name)*
at*(name your group)* News.

Mind where you are walking and make sure you read the Guidebook before venturing out on any adventures.

(After the drama....Leader please continue)

ON WITH THE NEXT PART OF THE STORY:

After Faithful has rescued Christian and has been interviewed, he goes on his way whistling, happy to have been of help.

Before we continue with the story, let's look at some of the images presented in this session so we might have a better understanding of what the story means.

(Use a flipchart for this and have the questions below written out beforehand. Do a main heading 'THE AWFUL THINGS ABOUT THE BOG' but have it covered up until the questions have been answered)

QUESTIONS:

What do you think the bog represents?

What are the things that pull people down?

Can you identify any doubts and fears?

Misgivings?

Worries of the world?

What are the difficulties you face that bog you down?

What do you think of Mr Bendy getting out and leaving Christian to it?

Have you known people who leave you to face troubles alone? How do they make you feel?

Are there any other observations or questions you would like to ask or discuss?

(Add anything else you think may be relevant)

(Uncover 'THE AWFUL THINGS ABOUT THE BOG' and stand back from the flipchart and let everyone look at all that is written down. Read out the questions and answers to everyone again)

(Remember to leave the list on the flipchart until the end of The Pilgrim's Progress or keep a note for reference. You will find it useful when preparing future sessions)

CONTINUE TELLING THE STORY....

After Faithful gets Christian safely out of the bog, he leaves him to rest and get cleaned up. He hopes they will meet up further along the way and off he goes – whistling!

Not long after, along comes Alec Smart (Smart Alec to some of us). He is full of his own importance and looks like he knows everything about everything!

When Christian explains what has happened to him and where he is meant to be going, Alec tells Christian he has got himself into a pretty pickle and no mistake. He gives the impression that he had been to the City of Gold many times without any problems at all.

So, when Alec shows Christian an easier way, a quicker way....a chance to do his own thing and not worry about doing what the Preacher has told him to do, Christian can't resist. He very quickly forgets his good intentions and finds himself, yet again, off the Straight and Narrow Way and hopelessly lost.

Christian comes to a dead end. He tries to find out where he is, but it is not in the Guidebook. It seems that there are so many choices and pathways he is totally confused. He is so scared and tries to find his way, but only gets more and more lost.

Wouldn't you think Christian would have learned his lesson by now? It's amazing how very quickly he forgets his good intentions and finds himself, yet again, off the Straight and Narrow Way.

A bit like ourselves....if we are honest. We intend to stay focused, to do the right thing, to follow through what we feel God is asking of us – but somehow we get sidetracked.

Along comes an Alec Smart or someone similar, and we quickly forget all our good intentions in our efforts to find a quicker, easier way – a chance to do our own thing. Sounds familiar, doesn't it?

Again Preacher comes to Christian's rescue and asks him why he didn't do what he was told.

Christian is so very, very, very sorry.

The people he trusted have let him down: Mr Ob Stinate, Mr Bendy and Alec Smart. He feels a total failure and that he's no good at this pilgrim thing.

But Preacher puts his arm around him and offers words of encouragement: "There's no mistake you've made today that hasn't been made by others before you. **The great thing is NOT TO GIVE UP.**"

He gives Christian specific instructions: "**Go back to the Straight and Narrow Way, keep going straight – as far as the wicket gate.**"

Christian is so grateful for a second chance. He's humbled by his foolishness, but now feels ready to face any trial or hardship on his journey to reach the City of Gold.

The daylight fails around him, the distant light glimmers and on he travels to reach the wicket gate.

CONCLUSION:

What do you think we can learn from all of this?

(Let the group come up with some answers and list them on a new sheet of the flipchart)

(Some answers for you to have ready to help them think this through)

Read the book carefully before doing anything

Listen to what Faithful and Preacher have to say

Don't be distracted by others offering an easier way

Keep your goal in sight

I'm sure some of these comments would have helped Christian to journey better. He will still face many challenges as the story unfolds.

Remember that we, too, are on a journey. Look at the list we have made.

Does it help us to prepare for our journey?

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The great thing is not to give up, go back to the Straight and Narrow Way and keep going straight.

FOR YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE:

Bible verses to help you stay on the right path.

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SESSION 2
THE GREAT BOG MISERY

Some (NIV) Bible verses which reinforce what we have been talking about today

Psalm 40:2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire. He set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.

Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.

Psalm 86:11 Teach me Your way, O Lord, and I will walk in Your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear Your name.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

Matthew 7:14 But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

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