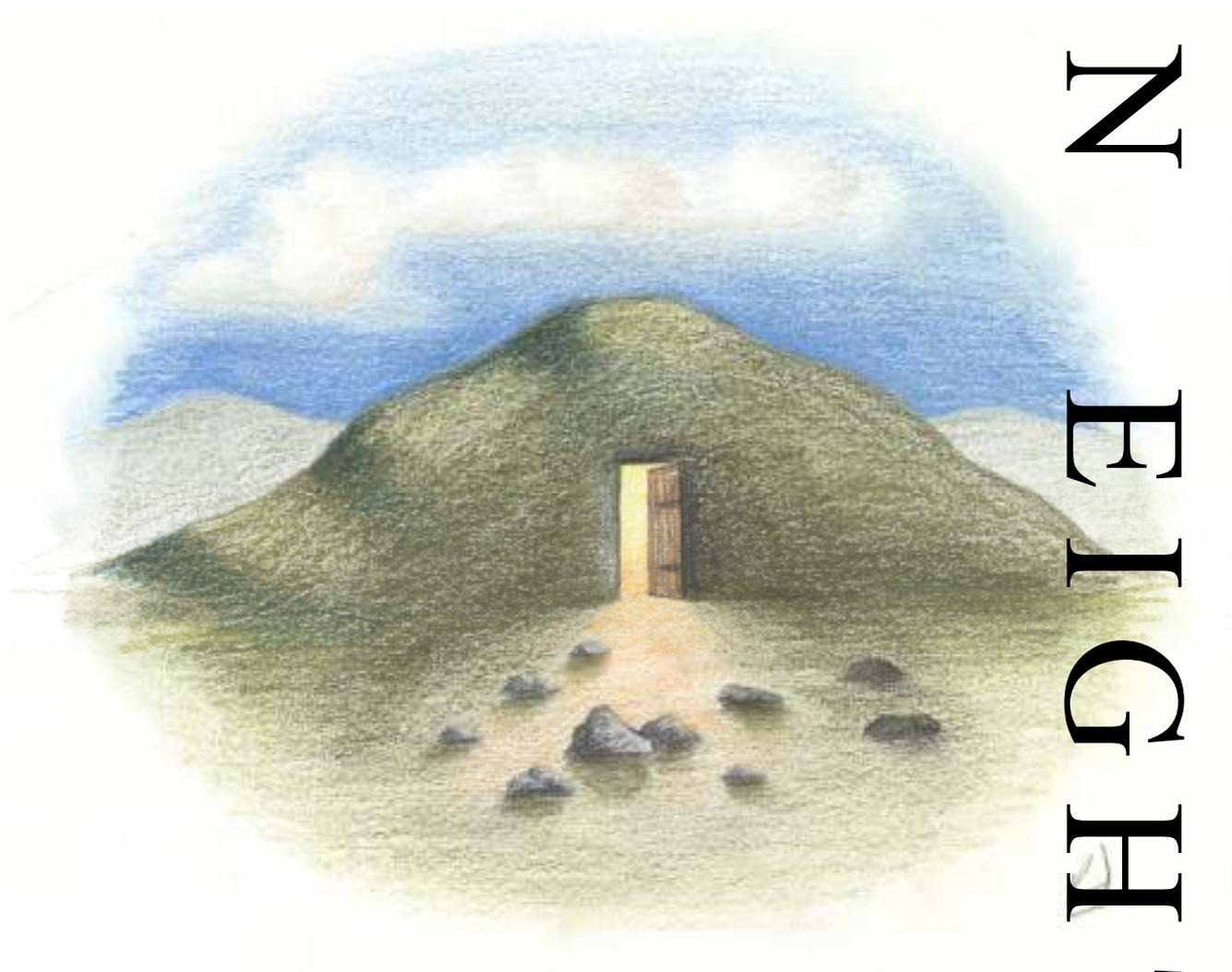


*The Door in the Hillside, The Delectable Mountains,
Ambush and The Poppy Fields*

SESSION EIGHT



SESSION EIGHT

Outline: The Door in the Hillside, The Delectable Mountains, Ambush and The Poppy Fields

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

PILGRIMS HAVE FOUR DIFFERENT THINGS TO TAKE ON BOARD AND NEGOTIATE: (1)The Door in the Hillside, (2)The Delectable Mountains, (3)The Ambush and (4) The Poppy Fields

DRAMA (1) WITH THE SHEPHERDS

THE NEXT PART OF THE JOURNEY

TRICKED INTO TAKING THE WRONG ROAD

DRAMA (2) MEETING ATHEIST

HOW DO YOU THINK THEY MAY BE FEELING?

SUMMARY AND THE GUIDEBOOK SAYS: Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Let us throw off everything that hinders, and let us run with perseverance, the race marked out for us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The Christian life is not an easy road and it's not a crutch. It's a discipline and a commitment.

SONG: TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS

CLOSING PRAYER

PREPARE BEFOREHAND:

Read Chapters 10, 11 and first part of 12 of the book and Session Eight notes.

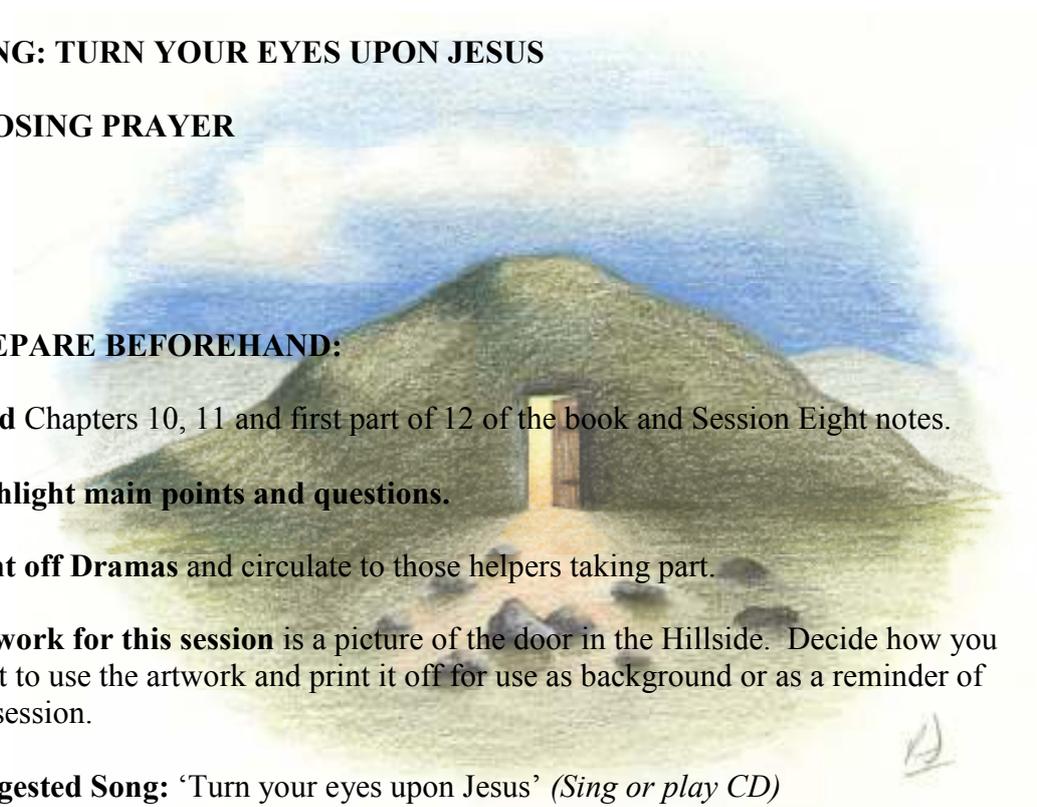
Highlight main points and questions.

Print off Dramas and circulate to those helpers taking part.

Artwork for this session is a picture of the door in the Hillside. Decide how you want to use the artwork and print it off for use as background or as a reminder of the session.

Suggested Song: 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus' (*Sing or play CD*)

Print off Hebrews 12:1-2 for your Travel Guide.



*Session Eight: The Door in the Hillside,
The Delectable Mountains,
Ambush and The Poppy Fields*

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM LAST TIME?

Can you remember what it was about?

Filthy Lucre and Doubting Castle

Where did we leave Christian and Hopeful?

Running for their lives to escape from Giant Despair and his horrid wife

What significance did the Key have?

It represented the Word of God that was able to set them free

Do you remember anything else about the story?

We talked about doubts and what effect they had on us and discussed ways of overcoming them

(There is a lot to cover in this session. Don't take long discussing the above, only enough time to remind them of what happened last time)

FOR THIS SESSION THE PILGRIMS HAVE FOUR DIFFERENT THINGS TO TAKE ON BOARD AND NEGOTIATE:

It may be easier to remember if we put them on the flipchart

(Put headings on the flipchart beforehand and leave enough space to put comments underneath)

- 1. The Door in the Hillside**
- 2. The Delectable Mountains**
- 3. The Ambush**
- 4. The Poppy Fields**

*(Unroll and show the scroll map of the journey so far and talk them through from the beginning up to the Delectable Mountains. Encourage their comments as you go. You will find instructions on how to prepare a scroll map in the **How to use this resource** section at the beginning of this book, under **Visual Aids and other Props**.)*

Today our Pilgrims have some more hurdles to negotiate, so let's get on with the story:

After fleeing Doubting Castle and Giant Despair, it's not long before Hopeful and Christian find themselves in a **very pleasant land**.

The land is surrounded by snow-capped mountains and a beautiful alpine meadow, filled with lots of sweet smelling flowers stretching before them.

There are some sheep with lovely white fleeces grazing on every conceivable ledge and slope, with their bells blowing in the breeze.

There's a group of shepherds sitting around a fire playing reed pipes and wood whistles. The scene is so idyllic that Christian and Hopeful are unwilling to go forward.

The shepherds catch sight of them and beckon them closer.

(Drama 1)

DRAMA (1): WITH THE SHEPHERDS

Cast: Narrator, Christian, Shepherd, Hopeful, Miss Stake and Mr Smug

Props: **The Door in the Hillside artwork** (*printed and enlarged and put where it can be seen*)
Binoculars - called spyglass (if you don't have binoculars, shape your hands around your eyes to look like binoculars)

Christian: (*Turning to the shepherd*)
Where exactly are we?

Shepherd:
On the King's territory, sir, on the Delectable Mountains. The sheep you see are the King's sheep and we are the King's shepherds.

Hopeful:
Are we going the right way for the Golden City?

Shepherd:
You are, if you don't turn aside from it.

Christian:
How much further is it?

Shepherd:
Too far – except for those who get there.

Hopeful:
Is the way ahead safe?

Shepherd:
Safe for those who come to no harm.

Narrator:
Christian smiled wanly and scratched his head. He did not venture to ask about a bed for the night; he was not sure he would understand the answer.

The shepherds invite them to stay at their home. On the way down the hill they pass a gate in the hillside...it looks frightening. There is a chute of blackness and a tunnel falling away into nothingness...a fast route to nowhere.

Shepherd:
Many's the Pilgrim who comes within sight of the Golden City only to end his journey there.
(*Shepherd points to the door in the hillside picture*)

Hopeful:
Are we within sight of the Golden City?

Shepherd:
You can see it from here with the help of this spyglass....here....see for yourselves. (*Shepherd passes the spyglass to them to have a look*)

Narrator:

The shepherd passes the spyglass to them. They are so excited to have the opportunity for a glimpse of the City of Gold, but are disappointed because they cannot see it clearly....all they can see is a brightness.

They arrive at the shepherd's home, which is beside a bubbling brook. The beds have warm, clean fleeces on them....there is broth cooking over a turf fire. Two other Pilgrims look up when Christian and Hopeful enter. Christian recognises them immediately - Mr Smug and Miss Stake. Hopeful had never met them.

Christian: *(Turning to Mr Smug and Miss Stake)*

How are you? I was worried when you went in the wrong direction at the hill.

Mr Smug: *(as smug as ever)*

The important thing was to be on the way. It doesn't really matter how you get there.

Christian:

Have you got your Scrolls yet for the Golden City?

Miss Stake:

I am a good woman and there is no need for a Scroll. I will get in all right.

Narrator:

Next morning....Hopeful and Christian rose early and wanted to get going before the other two were awake, but the shepherd advised them differently.

Shepherd:

There are dangerous gangs of robbers on the way....it would be better to travel together.

Narrator:

The shepherd goes on to tell them of the King's Champions, who everyone fears. He tells them that when Pilgrims are in trouble they need only whistle and the King's Champions will come to their aid.

He goes on to tell the story of Little Faith who was attacked and beaten. Fortunately, she had her Scroll sewn inside her coat otherwise it would have been stolen from her. She could have whistled for the King's Champions, but she didn't have enough faith.

Christian thought about Little Faith; he didn't think he was good enough or had enough faith either. Hopeful wasn't sure....but she was certain that Faithful would have summoned the King's Champions for help....if he was here.

Mr Smug is in no doubt....he is so sure that the King's Champions will be ready and waiting for him at any time. So he whistles for their help even when he doesn't need it.

He gets more than he bargained for....as the King's Champions come....more than one of them....and carry him away in chains. They deposit him in the Door in the Hillside.

When Christian and Hopeful see this they are shocked and sorry for Mr Smug, but Miss Stake couldn't care less and is doubly sure she will be OK.

(End of Drama)

DISCUSS: Do you think Mr Smug got what he deserved? Why?*He was always so sure of himself and full of his own importance**He didn't heed any advice he was given**He thought he knew best about everything**He didn't think he needed the Scroll**He thought everyone was a fool, but actually he was the fool***What do you think about Miss Stake?***She also thought she knew better than anyone else**She followed her own inclinations**She didn't care about anyone but herself, which showed itself in her**irritable indifference when Mr Smug is put into the Door in the Hillside***THE NEXT PART OF THE JOURNEY:****My goodness, it is all very exciting and full of danger, is it not?**

This part of the story is called Ambush and here we find Christian, Hopeful and Miss Stake at a fork in the road. There is no Signpost and they are not sure which way to go.

It's then that a little Irish man tells them just what they want to hear.

Flattering them and feeding their pride, he talks about their wisdom, their looks, their calibre and how pleased the City of Gold will be to have them.

TRICKED INTO TAKING THE WRONG ROAD:

Miss Stake doesn't like the Irishman and deliberately goes ahead on the opposite pathway to that suggested.

With his smooth talking, O'Flaherty lures Christian and Hopeful into a hidden net, that closes in on them and has them dangling from a tree....helpless.

He jeers at them and tells them they would believe anything good about themselves, but he is going to teach them a lesson in humility.

Hopeful tries to whistle for the King's Champions, but can't because she is crying. She tells Christian to have a go, but he can't do it either....because he thinks he deserves to be caught up in the net.

And so they are left hanging....submitted to the spite and vindictiveness of their ambusher....until he wearies of his game and leaves them hanging in pain.... some miles along the wrong path.

(Drama 2)

SESSION EIGHT

DRAMA (2): MEETING ATHEIST

Cast: Narrator, Hopeful, Christian and Atheist

(When there is a description of clothes, if possible, dress appropriately to help with the visual aid)

Narrator:

Enter a shabby, ragged man who comes along and cuts them down with a pocket knife and all the time wearing a look of amused disgust. His name is Atheist.

Atheist:

Wrong path....wrong path? When will you people realise....there is no such thing as a right path. It doesn't exist you know.

Hopeful:

What doesn't?

Atheist:

The City of Gold....it doesn't exist! All my life I've travelled up and down these lanes.... searching....just like you....expecting to find it over the next hill....but it was never there. It's a fairy tale....wishful thinking. There's nothing at the end of the road....but the start of the road back. Save yourselves a trip.

Hopeful:

Who are you....what's your name? Did the enemy send you to discourage people with your lies?

Atheist: *(laughing)*

The enemy....he's a fairy tale too! No heaven and no hell....no King and no enemy. And still you keep coming....why can't you just accept the proof? I've looked for a lifetime....and it just isn't there.

Narrator:

The sight of them sitting on the ground ready to argue, but with no ready argument to give, makes him laugh all the more....laugh and laugh....but there is a bitter metallic edge to his laughter.

Hopeful: *(calls after him, as he walks off)*

You can't prove a negative! No one can prove a thing doesn't exist....it's a scientific impossibility!

Narrator:

Atheist turns and looks back, dislodging his spectacles and spreading his hands out either side of his body, inviting them to look at his shabbiness.

Atheist:

I *am* the proof....you poor deluded noodles....I *am* the proof!

(End of Drama)

SO HERE THEY ARE AGAIN....HOW DO YOU THINK THEY MIGHT BE FEELING?

*Disillusioned, doubting, feeling foolish, not sure of themselves....?
But...GLAD TO BE FREE!*

They are on the right road once again and moving forward.

Before long they come to amazing Poppy Fields....**but watch out Christian and Hopeful....these Poppy Fields may be beautiful....but they are deadly!**

They think at first there is a heat haze rising off the Poppy Fields, but it turns out to be:

- **a stupefaction of sleepiness**
- **an intoxication of drowsiness**
- **an enchantment**

Hopeful is ready to lie down and rest, as they are both tired, but Christian recognises the danger and tries hard to keep them both awake.

They try quizzes and riddles to keep themselves awake. They stumble over Miss Stake who is fast asleep among the flowers and, between them, carry her to safety and leave her to waken.

They've made it....they are safe now....bandit country is pastenchantment has lost its power....and Christian and Hopeful pass the sweetest of days of their whole pilgrimage walking through the land of Beulah.

Their happiness increases daily....but little did they know what lay ahead. It is here we must leave them until next time, but let's think a little more about what we have been hearing today.

SUMMARY: *(speak slowly and deliberately, pause at each break and give them time to ponder)*

The journey takes its toll....look how far they have come.

They are two very different people to those who started out.

(You can use the Scroll map again at this point to show how far they have come and to remind the group of the various parts of their journey)

Experience should help them and us to make fewer mistakes, don't you think?

We can see that the temptations or diversions just become more subtle.

WHAT IS JOHN BUNYAN TRYING TO SAY TO US?

Just like the two Pilgrims, we can get weary of the long journey and become complacent

We need to be watchful and ready for whatever comes along

We can become so tired we need to rest

The saying goes, 'When the going gets tough, the tough get going'

Is that true....or is it more difficult when everything is easy and pleasant?

What happens to us?

We are almost at the end of our journey....our goal (the City of Gold) is in sight....but that is often when we can become weary and complacent.

In the light of what we have been saying, how can the two Pilgrims protect themselves from the perils that lie ahead?

Keep looking ahead

Don't give up

Can you remember some of the friends or foes they met on their journey and how they affected them?

(Make 2 lists on flipchart, Helpful and Unhelpful)

*Faithful, Hopeful, the Preacher, the Shepherds were kind and helpful
Mr Ob Stinate, Alec Smart, Mr Smug, Mr Bendy, Atheist, O'Flaherty,
Giant Despair and his wife, all tried, one way or another, to get them
off the Straight and Narrow Way*

What do you think today's session is trying to tell us?

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER:

The Christian path is not an easy road

- It's not a crutch
- It's a discipline
- It's a commitment

Something that Mr Smug did not understand....and Miss Stake was yet to realise

THE GUIDEBOOK SAYS: Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

Let us throw off everything that hinders and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.

THE REWARDS ARE OUT OF THIS WORLD!!

SONG: 'Turn your eyes upon Jesus'

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CLOSING PRAYER

**FOR THE TRAVEL GUIDE: Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV
and the MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH TO REMEMBER**

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THE DOOR IN THE HILLSIDE**

Hebrews 12:1-2 NIV

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