

Introduction

Welcome to Pilgrimages – The Pilots Worship material for 2018

In this pack you will find material to run 4 Pilots sessions. Each section includes background material that can be used as is, added to, or used as a basis for carrying out your own research. The intention is that you prepare material for sharing with your Pilots that is of the right level for them.

If you are a church who is using this pack, it can be used with holiday clubs, or could even be adapted for use with adults in discussion groups, or simply used as service material. It is recommended that the material be used in a service that recognises the place of Pilots within the URC and other denominations.

In each weeks material you will also find ideas for art and craft, games, an activity sheet (with things such as word searches, codes and puzzles) and material for the weekly worship section. Many of these link directly to activities that are recommended for inclusion in the all age worship.

Of course, you can move material between weeks if you prefer, as they all relate to Pilgrimages. Activities and games can easily be modified to be used with the different themes of each week.

Section 1 – Pilgrimages in other religions

Introduction

People in many religions make pilgrimages. Maybe the most well known is from the religion of Islam, where every Muslim is expected to visit Mecca at least once in a their life. Mecca is the birth place of Mohammed and also the site of Mohammed's first revelation of the Quran. Mohammed was the founder of the Islamic faith and set out the rules for all Muslims to live by in the Quran.

Every year, over 15 million muslims visit Mecca. Many of them do this during a time known as the Hajj, which means pilgrimage. This is in the twelve month of the Muslim calendar called Dhu al Hijjah.

Another famous pilgrimage is from the Hindu religion and is in four parts. Collectively known as Char Dham, it actually involves visiting four different places in different parts of India. They are situated in the North, South, East and West of India and are all very different.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:India_location_map.svg

Each site now has a very impressive and different temple that pilgrims can visit.

<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Temple-Jagannath.jpg>

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3e/Rameswaram_temple_%2811%29.jpg

Sikhs also have their own pilgrimage sites. The Sikh faith was founded by Guru Nanak, and so many Sikhs visit sites that were key places in his life. These are all in Pakistan. However, the most famous Sikh pilgrimage site is the Golden Temple in the Punjab region of India. Another very popular site is the city of Nankana Sahib, which is where Guru Nanak was born. This is in the Punjab region of Pakistan.

In Buddhism, Guatama Buddha (who is the founder of Buddhism) identified four sites worthy of pilgrimage. These are Bodh Gaya, which is where the Buddha realized enlightenment when he saw the Bodhi Tree, Lumbini, which is his birth place, Sarnath, which is where he delivered his first teaching, and Kusinara, which is where the Buddha died. These sites are all in northern India.

Game 1

To prepare for this game you will need to print off several pieces of paper and stick them up on the walls around the room in a random order. Each piece of paper will contain some words of a sentence about pilgrimages in different religions. Pilots can play individually, or in twos or threes. You will know what will work best for your Pilots. Each 'team' will be given a piece of paper with the first word or group of words on it. They need to find the piece of paper with that word printed on the left. They then write down the word printed on the right on the same piece of paper, and then search for a piece of paper with that word on the left. Gradually they will discover a whole sentence. When they get to the end the last word will be end. It is a race, but you could give each team a small prize as they finish, and encourage those that have finished to help those that are struggling.

The words you need for the game are prepared for you in a printable format from the affiliation area on the Pilots web site. You need to print it and cut it into sections for sticking to the walls.

Game 2

This game links to the worship theme that many religions are looking at the same things but from different angles. Most religions have pilgrimages of some sort, but to different places. The intention is always the same – to have a spiritual experience that will enhance and deepen the individuals faith. Therefore you may want to hold worship before this game.

Around the room, stick up photos of things from around your building taken from strange angles, so that it isn't obvious what they are. Give each photo a number. Each Pilot then goes round the room trying to identify them and write down what they think they are. They can work in twos or threes if they prefer – you will know what is best for your group. At the end (you determine how long they need) go through the answers and see who scored the most. For some generic photos or well known objects taken from unusual angles, download from the affiliation area of the Pilots web site.

Game 3

This game links to the worship story where blind men feel an elephant, so you may wish to play this game after worship.

You will need a number of house hold objects placed in opaque bags. Pump bags would be ideal, but any cloth bags will do. The idea is for the Pilots to guess what the object is. You can do this by passing the bags round, or the Pilots moving round 'stations' around the room. You can use your own objects, but we suggest the following items:

A mobile phone	A ruler	A TV remote	A ball
A toilet roll	A watch	A coaster	A toothbrush
A torch	A calculator	An orange	A pencil

Art and craft 1

Hand out maps of India and pictures of the four temples that are visited as part of Char Dham. Stick the pictures onto the map in the right places, and either write the names on or cut out the names and stick them on. Add a title of Hindu pilgrimage – Char Dham.

Art and craft 2

Make a puzzle sheet around the theme of travelling to pilgrim sites in different religions. You could include a maze with any of the pilgrimage sites as the destination, or make a word search, or a crossword puzzle.

Worship

People of all religions believe that pilgrimages bring benefits to the pilgrim. However Christians wouldn't normally make a pilgrimage to Mecca or other sites that are aligned to other religions.

However, all religions that worship a single all powerful God have many things in common. The following story can be used to explain how we are all looking at God from different angles, and could be worshipping the same God but seeing Him differently.

Six blind men encounter an elephant – although how they knew that it was an elephant the story does not recount. The first touches its trunk and says that an elephant is like a palm tree, another touches its side and says that an elephant is like

a rough wall. Another feels its tail and says that an elephant is like a piece of rope. Each comes into contact with a different part of the elephant and is convinced that their own explanation is correct and that the others are wrong. None of them realises that they are all experiencing just one part of the same elephant and that none of their explanations are complete.

For Deckhands and Adventurers, explain that just because someone sees something differently, it doesn't necessarily mean that they are wrong. Ask the Pilots if they can think of things that look differently depending on how you look at them. Use the photographs that you may have used in the game earlier to illustrate this.

You may also wish to use pictures that can be seen in two different ways, such as the dress that looked different colours, or a picture that could be a horse or a rabbit. Examples are included at the end of the pack.

For older Pilots, you may wish to encourage discussion about what the story means. If the elephant represents God, it may help discussion to suggest that maybe the elephant is able to speak to the blind men. If the elephant has the ability to make the men see again, they would get a much better picture of what the elephant is like. Christians believe that God reveals himself through what he does on earth, and particularly through His life on earth in Jesus Christ.

You will know the right level to take this discussion to with your own Pilots.

You may wish to use one of the alternative versions of the story that can be linked to from the affiliation area of the pilots web site - one in verse, and one a modern version (though very different).

After sharing relevant stories and discussion, conclude by pointing out that whatever our individual views and beliefs, we must be tolerant of people from other religions, and recognise that just because Christians don't choose to visit Mecca or Char Dham, this can still be important to people of other religions, and Christians should respect this.

Prayer

Dear Lord. Help us to respect the opinions of people in other religions, and to appreciate the importance of their pilgrimages. Help us to accept that we might not always see everything that there is to see, and to keep an open mind about how the teachings and practices of other religions could actually help us to be better Christians.

Section 2 – Christian Pilgrimages in other countries

Introduction

In week one we heard how people in other religions go on spiritual journeys called pilgrimages. Christians also often go on pilgrimages. There are many places that can be visited, but this week we will look at some of the most popular. Christians often say that it is not the place being visited that is most important, but the journey itself. In order to get the most out of the pilgrimage it is important to plan the journey well. We might want to think about who we will be journeying with, how we will travel, what we will want to take with us and what we are hoping to get out of the visit.

Many people visit the Holy Land, which is the general term for the area that Jesus lived in when he was on earth. Specifically Bethlehem and Jerusalem are popular sites. The Sea of Galilee is also popular as visitors can easily imagine the many stories of Jesus and the disciples in their boats, fishing, or simply being used as a place Jesus could talk to the crowds where they could see him.

A second place that is popular with Christian pilgrims is Santiago de Compostela. The journey taken to visit there is a walk known as Camino de Santiago. It is nearly 500 miles in length, and goes from St Jean-Pied-du-Port near Biarritz in France to Santiago. The tomb at the end of the journey is the tomb of St James, which is on the Iberian Peninsula. There are many different routes that can be walked, but all are relatively easy paths, and are very well trodden! Hundreds of thousands of people make these journeys every year. The tomb itself was discovered in 814, and people have been walking to see it since then.

Another popular pilgrimage site is Lourdes in France. It was here that on a grey February day more than 150 years ago a 14-year-old girl named Bernadette Soubirous saw a radiant vision of a woman standing on the rock above her. Over the course of the next five months Bernadette would see the woman 17 more times, a series of visions that would make Lourdes the most famous healing shrine in the world and Bernadette a beloved saint. Each year more than five million visitors from around the world come to Lourdes and stand before the same rock where Bernadette saw her mysterious visions. A long line of people slowly winds into the grotto, where they reverently touch the rock and leave photographs, flowers, and other tokens. Nearby is a place where pilgrims can collect water from the spring that flows out of the shrine, water that is said to have healing properties. Lourdes, more than any other pilgrimage spot, is associated with miraculous cures. Sixty-six have been officially documented by the Roman Catholic Church, which maintains a Medical Bureau at the shrine. Cures must meet a stringent set of criteria. Prior to coming to Lourdes, the person must have received a medical diagnosis of an illness regarded as incurable by any current means. The cure has to be complete and permanent. The bureau doesn't certify such cures as a miracle—that determination is done by the church—but it does pronounce some cures as "inexplicable."

Our final popular pilgrimage site is Rome. As the home of the Pope, this is most popular with Roman Catholics, and of all the places that are visited in Rome, probably the most popular is St Peter's Basilica. Saint Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, and the first Pope, is said to be buried here.

Game 1 – Pilgrim sites

Put the names of the four Christian Pilgrimages up around the room. Play music during which the Pilots walk, dance or run around the room. When the music stops everyone must pick a Pilgrimage site to visit. At random, an officer then chooses one

of the sites (it is best to use pieces of paper with the names on so that no 'favouritism' is possible). Anyone who is at that site gains a point. You then repeat numerous times, keeping score for each person. You can do this secretly on a piece of paper, openly on a white board, or each Pilot can keep their own score. You will know what works best for your group. The one with the highest score at the end wins.

Game 2 – Story Race

As this story is used in worship, you may want to do worship before this game is played, so that it reinforces what they have already heard.

Using the story provided at the end of this pack (a printable version can be downloaded from the affiliation area on the Pilots web site) run a story race.

If you are not familiar with story races, you need to split the Pilots into 2 or 3 teams, ideally with between 6 and 8 Pilots per team. This is a racing game, so match people of similar size or ability against each other. Each team sits on chairs facing the front, with one person in front of the other, so that the first members of each team are level, with a decent gap between the teams. The first person in each team is given the first name (see story sheet), the second person the second name and so on. We have put the most active names at the top of the list, so it's best to put your fittest Pilots at the front.

As you read the story, each time you say the name of one of the 'characters' in the story, the people with that name run round the whole team. It's important that everyone runs the same way round or accidents can happen! So everyone gets up on their right side, runs to the front, round the front of their own team, down the other side and round the back of their team, and back to their seats where they sit down. Whoever is first to sit back down wins a point for their team. Note that the people at the front will simply run down one side and back on the other. You will need a separate leader keeping score to the one reading the story.

You might also want to allocate a word that means the whole team has to get up, run round and back to their seats, but this may depend on your Pilots. Always put safety first!

Art and Craft 1

Using a map of the world, find the four pilgrimage sites mentioned in the introductory material. Print out a copy of the pictures supplied of each of them and ask the Pilots to cut them out and stick them on to the map in the appropriate place, with an arrow to exactly where they are.

Art and Craft 2

If you were going on a 500 mile walk on the Camino, make a list of what you would need to take with you. Would you plan stops along the way, or would you take a tent? Would you buy food on the journey or would you take food with you, remembering that you would need to carry everything with you along the way? Who would you like to journey with?

Art and craft 3

Draw a picture of St Peter's Basilica. Many pictures of it can be found online, and it is a very distinctive building. Maybe a group of your Pilots can make a model. Perhaps you can make a simple version of it out of Lego or similar. Pictures of a Lego model created by Father Bob Scranton can be found online, but he took 10 months to build his!

Worship

Luke 2: 41 to 49.

Jesus's parents went on an annual Pilgrimage to Jerusalem, at the Passover. When Jesus was old enough to go (when he was 12) he went too. There were many people going from the same village, so they all travelled together. They stayed for a number of days before beginning the journey back home. Jesus' parents assumed that Jesus was with someone else when they were travelling back, but after a day they realised that he was not with them, and so they had to go back for him. When they got back they found Jesus in the temple talking to all the wise teachers and asking them difficult questions.

Sometimes we feel lost or alone, but when we do we should remember that Jesus is always with us and will always look after us. We shouldn't be afraid to ask the difficult questions, or to admit that sometimes we don't have all the answers. People who make pilgrimages often do so to find out more about themselves, and to find out more about God. We don't have to travel to foreign places to find out more about God – we just need to be open to listening to Him talking to us.

Let us pray

Lord Jesus, we often don't have all the answers, and we don't know where to turn. Help us to remember that you are with us and that we only have to trust in you and you will help us through our difficult times.

Amen.

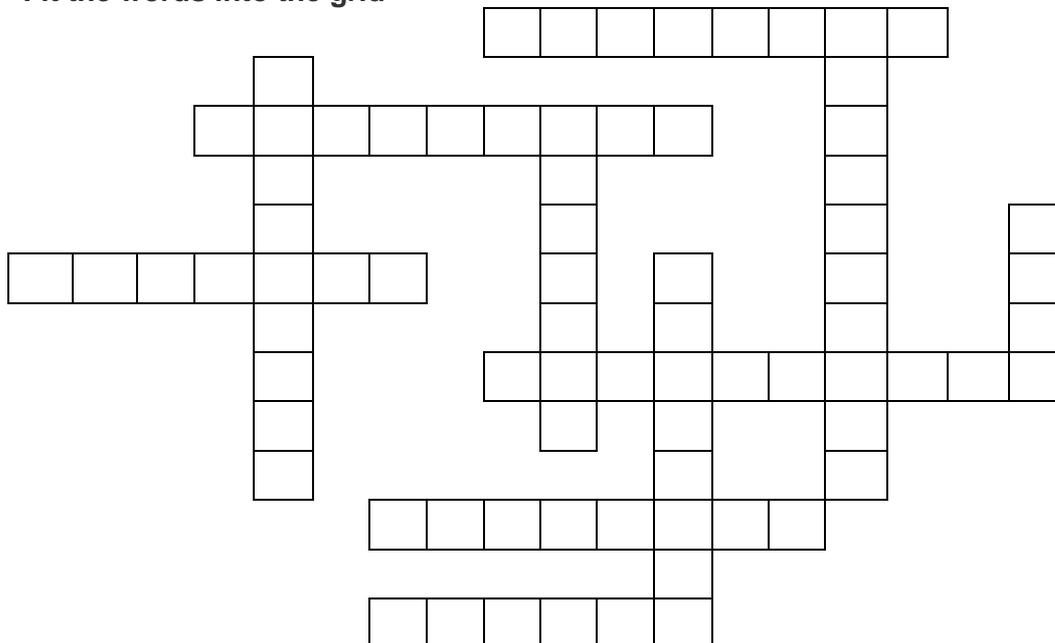
Activity sheet – session 2

Word search

E	U	H	M	R	K	U	J	L	E	S	O	K
Y	Q	L	O	U	R	D	E	S	F	L	E	F
B	Q	R	G	L	S	Q	C	Q	N	U	U	A
I	D	Z	A	H	Y	A	T	B	O	J	Z	C
U	D	C	I	R	M	L	C	E	E	I	O	I
D	T	Q	T	I	Q	C	A	R	P	M	Z	L
H	B	G	N	A	B	B	U	N	P	Z	W	I
E	I	O	A	T	E	S	M	A	D	U	G	S
G	V	L	S	L	A	P	S	D	M	M	Q	A
U	S	M	N	L	I	T	N	E	T	E	Q	B
R	O	M	E	H	E	L	H	T	E	B	F	Z
Q	T	M	L	L	R	X	E	T	G	J	Y	A
E	T	M	A	Q	D	W	E	E	L	C	Z	H

BASILICA
BERNADETTE
BETHLEHEM
CAMINO
COMPASTELA
GALILEE
HOLYLAND
JERUSALEM
LOURDES
ROME
SANTIAGO

Fit the words into the grid



4 letters

Rome

6 letters

Camino

7 letters

Galilee

Lourdes

8 letters

Basilica

Holyland

Santiago

9 letters

Bethlehem

Jerusalem

10 letters

Bernadette

Compastela

Section 3 – Christian Pilgrimages in Britain

Introduction

Many people would like to experience the spiritual aspects of carrying out a pilgrimage without the expense and inconvenience of travelling to foreign countries. Fortunately there are many places you can visit in Britain that have special meanings for Christians, and it is likely that there is a popular pilgrimage site not far from wherever you live. If you can find a local one, and arrange for your Pilots to visit one, this would make a great trip on one of your normal Pilots meetings.

If you can't find any local places, the following places are in Britain and you can talk to your Pilots about these. Maybe some of your Pilots have visited some of these and can share their experiences with the group.

Canterbury Cathedral

There are two well known pilgrim paths that end at Canterbury Cathedral – one from Rochester and one from Winchester. A path can also be followed from Canterbury Cathedral to Santiago de Compostella that we looked at last week. Canterbury Cathedral is very familiar with receiving pilgrims, and has a dedicated team of priests who welcome pilgrims and provide tours of the Cathedral itself. More information can be found on their own web site - <https://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/visit/pilgrimage/>

The Cathedral welcomes nearly one million visitors a year who are interested in the rich history of the Cathedral, including the story of Archbishop Thomas Beckett who was canonised soon after he had been murdered by pope Alexander, and whose remains are still enshrined there. The original Cathedral at Canterbury was built in 597, giving the place a great deal of history.

Iona

A second important place for pilgrimages is Iona. A monastery was founded there by St Columba. Pilgrimages are well organised here, and you or your church can easily partake. One web site containing more details can be found here - <http://www.stcolumba-hotel.co.uk/index.php?id=75>

Glastonbury

Glastonbury is the destination of both Anglican and Catholic annual pilgrimages. The first modern pilgrimage was in 1895, but they have taken place annually since the early 1950s. Pilgrims often climb the Tor, which is a local hill. Much more can be found out about pilgrimages to Glastonbury here: <http://www.cliftondiocese.com/faith/glastonbury-pilgrimage/>

Winchester Cathedral

There is lots for children and young people to do at Winchester Cathedral, so if this happens to be near you, why not plan a visit. More details can be found here: <https://www.visitengland.com/experience/experience-life-pilgrim-winchester-cathedral>

Lindisfarne

Ever since 635, when King Oswald gave the Holy Island of Lindisfarne to St Aidan to establish his monastery, the island has been a place of pilgrimage. Each year there is an organised pilgrimage during Easter week, which culminates in the three mile crossing to Holy Island. This can only be done at low tide, so careful planning is required. The road to the island was constructed in the 1950s, and before this time walking following some stakes in the sand was the only safe way to complete the crossing. More details can be found here: <http://www.northumberlandcoastalb.org/pilgrims-way/>

For other ideas on Pilgrimage sites that may be nearer to you, look here :

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Christian_pilgrimage_sites

Game

Following a pilgrimage route can be like a treasure hunt, finding things of interest along the way, and ending up at the pilgrimage site, which can be something to treasure. The following are three suggested options for making treasure hunts, but don't be limited to these methods - you may have some ideas of your own.

1. Set a sequence of clues, each one leading to the next item in the trail. The last one should point at some treasure such as some sweets, or an instruction to ask a leader for a prize. Make the clues appropriate for your Pilots – ie for older ones make them more cryptic.
2. Take photos of places in your building, or in a local park, and print them on a sheet. Working in small groups, the Pilots have to find the places and try to take the same photo on their phones.
3. Write a puzzle where your pilots need to work through a sequence of clues to unravel a message using references to words in the bible. For example, each word could be referenced by a three number reference – chapter, verse and word.

Examples of all these types of treasure hunts can be found at the end of this pack, or on the affiliation area of the Pilots web pages.

Game 2

Everyone sits on chairs in a circle facing inwards, except for one person who starts in the middle with no chair. Everyone, including the person in the middle, is given a pilgrimage place name. The leader (an officer who is not playing the game) shouts two place names out. The two people who have those place names have to try to swap places without the person in the middle sitting on one of their chairs before them. If the person in the middle does sit on one of the chairs, the person without a chair is now in the middle. Continue playing in that way, but from time to time shout 'all change' at which point everyone has to swap to a different chair. Once people are used to the game, you can shout three place names, or even four at the same time.

Art and Craft

Make a maze using straws stuck on to cardboard with sticky tape so that you can roll a marble between the straws to get to the middle and out again. Alternatively this can be done with plasticine. Try this out yourself before doing this with the Pilots as you need to be sure the plasticine will stick to the card, and not to the marble, or that the straws will hold the marble. You may have other ideas for a similar activity using materials you have worked with before. The children should design their own mazes. They could do this with a pencil and paper before making the actual model.

Worship

If you used a treasure hunt that ended with sweets for the Pilots, ask them about the anticipation they felt whilst trying to get through the treasure hunt. Ask them if the journey and anticipation made it all the better when they finally got their prize. Talk about how much a better prize at the end makes the effort of the journey all the more worthwhile.

If you didn't give prizes in a treasure hunt, maybe you could hand out sweets at the start of worship, but tell them they have to wait to the end of worship before they get to eat them. Make sure they appreciate that the anticipation makes it all the better

when they finally eat them. Talk to them about how great it feels to a pilgrim after a walk of many miles, when they finally get to the journey's end, and they finally see the place they have been anticipating. After keeping them waiting for several minutes, let them eat their sweets.

Prayer

Lord, we know that some things are worth waiting for. We know that whilst we treasure many things, your love is the greatest treasure of all, and we get it without having to travel or wait. Help us to appreciate your love for us more than a prize we have had to earn.

Amen.

Puzzles

Mazes represent challenging journeys, with a clear beginning and an end, and so can remind us of pilgrimages.

For a variety of mazes, see <https://krazydad.com/mazes/>

These are free to use and print, though donations are invited. There is a variety of difficulty levels, so that you can find the right level for your Pilots.

Word search – session 3

British pilgrimages

X	Q	G	G	D	J	K	U	G	D	Y	V	I	M	H
V	J	Y	P	L	Y	R	R	X	S	H	L	E	J	F
H	A	A	R	W	A	R	C	H	B	I	S	H	O	P
Q	K	R	Y	E	I	S	U	T	Y	F	P	G	F	Y
Z	T	F	E	L	T	B	T	B	H	W	I	L	P	O
T	Q	L	A	T	R	S	C	O	R	V	R	K	O	T
L	I	N	D	I	S	F	A	R	N	E	I	Y	M	I
Z	L	M	T	N	P	E	T	N	T	B	T	E	O	G
O	X	A	Z	N	X	M	H	S	O	L	U	N	Q	N
E	I	F	F	G	V	T	E	C	B	M	A	R	A	K
N	F	J	J	M	I	H	D	D	N	U	L	U	Y	C
F	Q	E	E	B	C	W	R	K	I	I	P	O	O	L
X	Z	N	R	O	E	N	A	Z	K	Z	W	J	L	O
V	P	I	R	Y	Y	S	L	S	S	B	J	E	O	F
C	K	O	D	S	V	Z	F	U	B	A	V	V	E	A

ARCHBISHOP
CATHEDRAL
JOURNEY
ROCHESTER

BRITAIN
GLASTONBURY
LINDISFARNE
SPIRITUAL

CANTERBURY
IONA
MONASTERY
WINCHESTER

Section 4 – Pilgrims Progress and our spiritual pilgrimage through life

Introduction

John Bunyan wrote a book called 'The Pilgrims Progress' which was published in 1678. It is about the spiritual journey of a man called Christian as he travels through life, from The City of Destruction (which represents Earth) to The Celestial City (which represents heaven). The characters that he meets represent different obstacles that are in his way, trying to stop him getting to heaven. He wrote much of the book whilst in prison for non-conformist preaching in public.

He later wrote a part 2 to the book, which tells the story of Christian's wife – Christiana, their sons and the maiden, Mercy. This story demonstrates that we are all, regardless of sex and age, on a spiritual journey, and meet the same challenges.

There are DVD versions and children's versions of the book available, as well as kindle versions. This could be easily purchased online and used to either lend to the children, or serialised at Pilots over a number of weeks. Little Pilgrim's Progress by Helen L Taylor is suitable for children ages 6 to 12. Another version is by Geraldine McCaughrean (144 pages long).

The purpose of the book is to help us all along our individual journeys. It is important to recognise that all our journeys are different, but many of the challenges that Christian finds on his journey will be on our journeys too. What challenges we meet is not important. What is important is what we do when we meet them, and what impact they have on our lives. Challenging experiences should have the result of making us better people, and we should always remember that God will never put us in situations we can't cope with.

Game 1 – Journeying with distractions!

The idea of this game is to make your way from one side of the room to the other with a blindfold on. Whilst doing this, the other pilots will be telling them things to guide them – but half of them will be helping and half will be hindering. They mustn't touch the blindfolded person. Have a small prize for anyone who makes it to the target area. You may wish to put a time limit per person so that everyone can have time to have a go, or even do two or more people at once.

Game 2 – The game of life (also for worship) (best for older Pilots, but can be used with younger ones too)

Full details of how to play this game, and more importantly how to lead a discussion about the game afterwards, can be found at the end of this pack, but can also be downloaded in an easily printable form from the affiliation area of the Pilots web site. This game is intended to make people think about our life journey, and what impact we have on others as we travel through it.

A bible reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians, chapter 3 verse 14 reads (from the International Children's Bible):

'I keep trying to reach the goal and get the prize. That prize is mine because God called me through Christ to the life above'.

Explain that the prize is to be in heaven. Ask the children what they think it will be like in heaven.

Finish with a prayer. An example prayer is below:

Lord, we are all on a journey. A journey on which we hope we will get more like you every day. But it's hard. There are a lot of distractions on the way, and a lot of people that don't seem to want us to be like you. Help us to be focused on the right path – the path that leads to heaven.

Amen.

Pilgrims worship

This section gives you some material for worship. You can add to it, or miss things out as suit your congregation, but it is hoped that with the material from the previous weeks, plus the suggestions here you will be able to produce a service that is of interest and relevance to your congregation.

Introduction

Today we are looking at Pilgrimages. What is a pilgrimage? The Oxford English Dictionary says it is a journey to a place of particular interest or significance. It also says that from the literary world it is a view of life as a journey, an obvious reference to Pilgrims Progress written by John Bunyan. So today we are going to look at both places that people make pilgrimages to, and also at our spiritual journeys through life. But before we do, let's sing a rousing hymn – Guide me oh thou great Jehovah, Pilgrim through this barren land.

First hymn – Guide me oh, Though Great Jehovah

Pilgrimages in other religions

People in many religions make pilgrimages. Maybe the most well known is from the religion of Islam, where every Muslim is expected to visit Mecca at least once in a their life. Mecca is the birth place of Mohammed and also the site of Mohammed's first revelation of the Quran. Mohammed was the founder of the Islamic faith and set out the rules for all Muslims to live by in the Quran.

Every year, over 15 million muslims visit Mecca. Many of them do this during a time known as the Hajj, which means pilgrimage. This is in the twelve month of the Muslim calendar called Dhu al Hijjah.

Another famous pilgrimage is from the Hindu religion and is in four parts. Collectively known as Char Dham, it actually involves visiting four different places in different parts of India. They are situated in the North, South, East and West of India and are all very different.

Activity – word search

Produce a large version of the word search on activity sheet 1 and invite members of the congregation to come out when they see one of the words and point them out. You could have the word search projected on a screen, and a smaller version available for them to mark the words they find on.

Rather than talking about the different religions and pilgrimages before doing the word search, you may prefer to talk about them as people find them in the word search. You could even have something written for each word and ask the person who finds the word to read it out.

Second hymn – Moses I know you're the man

Places visited by Christians around the world.

If one or more of your church members have been on a pilgrimage to the holy land or anywhere else, ask them to tell the church about it. If you have a projector you could show any photographs they might have. If you don't have anyone who can share their experiences, use the words provided under 'words for use in worship', ideally read by different voices. These are actual accounts of people who have been to the

holy land. You can download photographs for use from the affiliated area of Pilots web site.

Talk about places visited by Christian pilgrims. Have names hidden around the room for people to find and fit into words on the screen. You can make up your own paragraph, or you can use the one below. The words in blue should be left out.

'Christians often visit **pilgrimage** sites around the world. Probably the most popular area is the **Holy Land**. This is the area that Jesus lived in. Many pilgrimages involve **long walks**, such as the walk from St Jean-Pied-du-Port to **Santiago**. At the end of the journey people visit the **tomb of St James**. Another popular place to visit is Lourdes in **France**. This is a place where miraculous **healings** are said to take place. Finally, many people visit Rome, which is the home of the **Pope**.'

Prayer

Lord we give thanks for the great variety of places around the world that we can visit as Christians. Places that remind us of the great things you have done, and the many people who have dedicated their lives to you. Help us to remember at all times of the great variety you have given us in this world.

Lords prayer

Collection

Third hymn – Will you come and follow me if I but call your name

Whilst visiting places like the holy land can be great spiritual experiences, and help us picture what life was like for Jesus much better, the cost of doing this can be prohibitive. But there are pilgrimages we can experience more easily within the UK. Many people go on pilgrimages to places such as Iona, Holy Island and Canterbury Cathedral.

At this point, if you can think of a place that is fairly local to you, it would be good to talk about it and perhaps share some photographs with the congregation. If not, use the material from week 3 to tell the congregation about popular pilgrimages in Britain. Use photos if you have a projector.

There are many more local places that people go on pilgrimages to, and even non-religious people can feel the benefits of a pilgrimage.

If you have the technology, show the Tony Robinson video about visiting a tree known as Majestic: <https://vimeo.com/190484844>

Prayer

Lord we give thanks for the many great places to visit here in Britain. We give thanks for the wide variety of buildings, landscapes and experiences we can have in our local area. We give thanks for the rich history that our country has, and the many lessons about life that we can learn from it. Help us to see you in everything.

Amen.

Fourth hymn – One more step along the world I go

Talk about Pilgrims Progress and the spiritual side of pilgrimages, using the notes from week 4, or from your own research or knowledge.

If you have technology available, you could show this short trailer advertising a musical version of Pilgrims Progress which is available on You Tube, released in 2017.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISfiC_gY7xY

Activity – if you have time, play a short version of The Game of Life, followed by a brief discussion on the points raised in the notes.

Prayer

Lord we give thanks for great writers like John Bunyan who can teach us how to live our lives to the benefit of ourselves and those around us through the words they have put into their books. We thank you that we can enjoy stories that teach us things, and that through these we can become better people. We ask for your help to become more like you as we journey through life.

Amen.

Lets close our worship by joining together to sing John Bunyan's great hymn – To be a Pilgrim

Closing hymn – To be a pilgrim

As a blessing, the prayer from week 4 can be used.

Alternative hymns:

- We are marching in the light of God
- I want to walk with Jesus Christ
- Follow me, follow me

Words for use in worship

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is always an amazing experience. To relive the story of Jesus, in the locations where it happened, is truly faith-enhancing. Even though many of the holy sites have churches built over them, even though there's no guarantee that these sites are in the actual place where something from the Gospels happened, even though there might be competing sites for the same event, we know things happened somewhere nearby, and faith and imagination do the rest.

But you're never far away from the politics of the region. To enter Bethlehem you have to go through the apartheid wall (my words – the official term is "Separation Barrier"). In the Palestinian territories you see good roads which the locals aren't permitted to use – only the illegal Israeli settlers. You hear that Christians are leaving the country in droves, and worry that soon there might not be any native Christians left in the land of Jesus.

So you return home understanding more of the "then" and the "now". And you return home with the desire to join the Psalmist in praying for the peace of Jerusalem, and to do something about it yourself.

For many a Holy Land trip is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Here are some testimonies from some of those who went for the first time in September 2016.

Andrew: The pilgrimage to the Holy Land has reinforced my faith. The sites that we visited, the churches we looked around meant so much, that I now think I understand why the Holy Land is so special. To tour with a group of like minded people made it all so special.

Jayne: It was such an amazing experience. It truly bought the pages of the bible to life and so much more!

Tony: Following in the footsteps of Jesus was an amazing experience for me and it brought to life the story of His ministry and suffering. At the time, and many times since, it has caused me to reflect on the events of 2,000 years ago. When I now read the Bible, I have a picture in my mind of what I am reading. It was valuable being in the company of fellow Christians particularly those from our Church. I enjoyed the gospel readings at each holy site. I know that buildings are only bricks and mortar but I thought the richness of the architecture of the churches and the wonderful and symbolic paintings, statues and mosaics created by previous generations to venerate those places was inspiring. Unforgettable! I also enjoyed travelling in such an historical and culturally rich part of the world and seeing first hand some of the current political issues, but that is another story.

Edith: Going on pilgrimage to the Holy Land has brought the Bible vividly to life for me. I know for myself now that the places are real, not just story book places with lovely names, and I can now properly picture in my mind the landscapes, the river Jordan, the wilderness, the olive groves, the great walled city of Jerusalem, the gently lapping Sea of Galilee ... around which Jesus walked, preached, lived, died. And if the places are real, that can only add weight and authenticity to the words and actions of Jesus in those places. I know now how the geography works, the distances between biblical sites, how beautiful or how wild and daunting they appear. I know the heat and cool of Israel, the smells, the good local food, the plants (the pomegranates, the mustard seeds, the Christ thorn), the sounds of crowded markets and the stillness of the lakeside, and it is very special to think that Jesus experienced these same sensations and scenes in the same landscape in his time. It is a kind of shared experience with Jesus; we know his country a little now, we know a little more of how and where he lived, and so we feel we can know him a little better to as a result of the pilgrimage.

Here are the sentences that the Pilots are trying to discover in 'game 1' in session 1. The words are below in the format you need them so that you can simple print, guillotine, and stick in a random order around the walls. Use multiple rooms if you have them, so that they have to search more.

Muslims are expected to visit Mecca at least once in their lives.

Hindus visit four temples in India, collectively known as the Char Dham.

Many Sikhs visit the Golden Temple in Amritsar founded by Guru Ram Das.

Gautama Buddha identified four sites of pilgrimage relating to his life.

Muslims are	Expected
Expected	To visit
To visit	Mecca
Mecca	At least
At least	Once in
Once in	Their lives
Their lives	End
Hindus visit	Four
Four	Temples
Temples	In India
In India	Collectively
Collectively	Known as
Known as	Char Dham
Char Dham	End
Many Sikhs	Visit the
Visit the	Golden temple
Golden temple	In Amritsar
In Amritsar	Founded by
Founded by	Guru
Guru	Ram Das
Ram Das	End

Guatama

Buddha

Identified

Four sites

Of pilgrimage

Relating to

His life

Buddha

Identified

Four sites

Of pilgrimage

Relating to

His life

End

Session 4 – Game 2

The game of life

Introduction

This game is best for small groups of older pilots, but can easily work with younger pilots, but not large groups. If you have a large group it would be best to split into smaller groups of between 4 and 8.

The aim of the game is to make the Pilots think about life. Pilgrims Progress is a allegory of life, and this game can make Pilots think about what they want to achieve in their lives, and what impact they are having on others.

Preparation

You need sheets of coloured A4 – 6 red, 10 yellow and 6 green, and at least one dice, preferable large dice. You also need quite a bit of time, not only for playing the game, but mainly to allow discussion afterwards. Whilst the game can be drawn out, you can close the game at any point. Those still in the game were still 'alive'. The sheets should be laid out on the floor, red ones, then yellow ones, then green ones.

Playing the game

The players roll the dice in turn. If they get a 1 they can join the game. They can join at any point on the path. They players continue to take turns in rolling. Once they are on the board, they will determine how they move (up the board is towards the green end, down the board is towards to red end) by adjusting the score they roll using the following rules: if on red deduct 2, if on yellow deduct 3, and if on green deduct 4. For instance, if on red and you roll a 4, you deduct 2 and therefore move forward 2 spaces. If your score is negative you move backwards. If at any point you roll a 6, you are out and must leave the board.

Either play until everyone is out, or simply put a time limit on the game and stop at that point.

Discussion

After playing, tell the Pilots the following:

1. Anyone whose last move was up the board wins, anyone whose last move was down the board loses.
2. The bottom of the board represented people who were born into lives where they didn't know Jesus. The top of the board was those who were born into christian families.

Invite the Pilots to observe any way in which the game was similar to life. No answers are wrong, but the following could be used to prompt discussion. The point of the game is the discussion.

1. Everyone joined the game and left the game at different times. We can start in different places, and like in life, no two 'journeys' are the same.

2. When everyone started the game, they didn't know the rules. They learned as they went along. Some rules we didn't know about till the game was over. Do we have to learn the 'rules of life' as we are 'playing'?
3. What about people who shook a 6 on their first turn in the game. This is like people who die very young. They didn't have a chance to move up or down.
4. When we were at the bottom of the board, it was easier to move up the board (because only 2 was deducted). Is this true in life? If we are born into Christian families, is it easier or harder to keep becoming better people? If we 'discover Jesus' during our lives, does that help us become better people?
5. Sometimes we had to share spaces. In life we are sometimes forced together with people we might not have chosen to spend time with. Sharing is a part of life.
6. Everyone has a different length game. The prize is getting in to heaven, but those who just get one turn in the game have as much chance of winning as those who have been playing a long time. None of us knows when we will die, so the only way to be sure to win is to keep moving up the board, to keep being a better person, all our lives.
7. In the game, we couldn't control the dice. In life, things happen to us that are out of our control, and sometimes it makes it very hard to keep going in the right direction – to keep becoming a better person. Do we have more control in real life than we had over the dice?

Example story race

Jesus goes to Jerusalem with his parents - Luke 2

One day, when **Jesus** was twelve, he travelled with his family to **Jerusalem** to celebrate the Feast of the Passover in the **temple**. He was so excited that he kept asking **Joseph** "Are we there yet? I can't wait to see the **temple** again!"

Whilst in **Jerusalem**, they worshipped **God** in the **temple** and celebrated the Passover. **Mary** and **Joseph** enjoyed talking to the **teachers**, and learning more about God. When the celebration was over, the adults and **children** from **Jesus'** village began their journey home from **Jerusalem**. The **children** were all running and playing together along the way. **Mary** and **Joseph** thought that Jesus was with the other **children**. But when they looked for him, he was nowhere to be found. **Mary** and **Joseph** were terribly worried!

"We must have left him behind in **Jerusalem**!" said **Mary**.

For three days, **Mary** and **Joseph** searched for **Jesus** in the crowded streets and markets of the city. At last, **Joseph** decided that they should look in the **Temple**... And there was **Jesus**! Sitting with the **teachers**, amazing them with his wisdom and how well he understood God's love. He was different to the other **children**.

Mary was very upset. "We have been searching for you everywhere!" said **Joseph**.

"Why were you searching for me?" **Jesus** replied gently. "Didn't you know that I would be in my father's house?"

Jesus had realised that **God** was his true father, and that the **temple** was the place he wanted to be. **Mary**'s eyes grew wide, and she never forgot that moment. **Jesus** grew into a man both strong and wise.

Jesus - 8

Mary - 7

Joseph - 7

Temple - 5

God - 4

Jerusalem - 4

Children - 4

Teachers - 2

Start Clue one can be found
In the church, where there's sound

Clue 1 Clue two is well hid
Where we serve wine and bread

Clue 2 Clue three's easily seen
At the air hockey machine

Clue 3 Clue four is harder
Does the church have a larder?
Where would it be, do you think?
Look under the sink

Clue 4 To find the next clue
What you have to do
Is climb the stairs to the top
When you get there, you stop

Clue 5 The next one is easy
If you know where to look
On top of the lectern
Under the Good Book

Clue 6 Back into the hall
As quick as a flash
Under the place
Where we put all our trash

Clue 7 In the Pilots room
It's not hard at all
It's near the place
Where we write on the wall

Clue 8 Back to the stairwell
Hiding in the gloom
It's stuck on the wall
But is this a room?

Clue 9 The final clue
Is hidden quite well
It's in the place
Where you ring the bell

Clue 10 When you find this
Your trail is done
Go and find Alan
And tell him you've won!