

Read Mark's Gospel

*Use these 6 studies alongside a copy
of Mark's gospel*

Study 1

Mark 1:14-34

Study 2

Mark 2:1-13

Study 3

Mark 4:35-41

Study 4

Mark 5:21-24, 16:1-8

Study 5

Mark 8:27-38

Study 6

Mark 10:35-52



Ready, Set, Go...

Whenever someone new turns up to our sports club or team, it takes some time for us to build up a full picture of them.

First we see them train and play. We judge them and decide how good they are and where they'll fit in (or not).

In time we then get to know them better. We find out what they like and don't like. We find out about how they respond to good times and hard times. We find out how they treat people who they like and those who they don't.

In time, we build up a picture and can answer the question "Who are they?" more fully.

Mark wrote his account of Jesus' life to answer the question "Who is Jesus?"

If you read through the book of Mark, you'll have seen what Jesus did and what he said. You'll have seen how he spoke with his closest friends and those who opposed him.

Mark is convinced that the most important thing you can do is to find out who Jesus is. He thinks discovering Jesus is the best news in the world.

We'll take a deep dive into Marks account through six short studies.

In each study we're going to look at three things:

Ready

Answer a question to start thinking and read some context to the study.



Set

Look at the Bible and see what it says to us today.



Go

Think about what you're going to do in response to the Bible.



Study 1

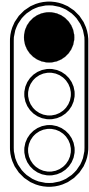
Mark 1:14-34

In sport and in life, we recognise all is not as it should be, and we hope for a better future.

**Where do
you look for
hope for the
future?**



Ready



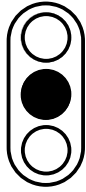
Mark starts his gospel with a bold claim:

“The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Mark 1:1

The Romans were familiar with the term “good news” (gospel) as it was used to announce great historic moments such as when emperors came to power. For the Jews reading the book it was even more significant. It spoke of ancient hope for a time when God himself would come to restore a broken world.

Mark wants his readers to know that what he is claiming about Jesus is incredibly significant.



Read Mark 1:14-34

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” ¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him. ¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. ²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” ²⁵ “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. ²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

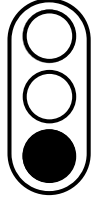
- 1 Which coach has had the most impact on your life? Why?
- 2 What are your first impressions of this man Jesus?
- 3 In verse 15 Jesus enters by declaring the arrival of the 'Kingdom of God' – what do you think he meant by this? Why could this be good news?

Mark will explain this more as he continues to write but Jesus makes clear the right response is to “repent and believe.” To “repent” means to stop what you were doing and turn around. Jesus’ announcement calls for a radical change. Verses 16-20 show us this radical change in action with the fishermen

Jesus then goes to a small town called Capernaum and begins to teach.

- 4 The people were amazed and fearful of Jesus because of how he taught (v22) and they responded to Jesus (v32-34). Why would people have responded to Jesus like this?
- 5 Today people might say Jesus was a historical figure but would not want to believe or trust in his teaching. Why do you think that’s the case?

Go



Jesus announced the arrival of the ‘Kingdom of God’ and then begins to heal many and teach with real authority. The healings are not something Jesus wants to draw attention to and instead are to be seen as signs of a broken world being restored.

- 9** What have you learnt about Jesus? Is there anything so far in his teaching/character that sheds light on our starting point that sport and life are not all as they should be?

use the space below to answer these questions



Study 2

Mark 2:1-12

If you could change one thing about your life what would it be?

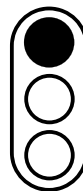
Maybe it would be more talent in your sport or restored relationships with your family and friends.

What we desire shows us what we think we need.

**What do
you think
humanity's
greatest
need is?**



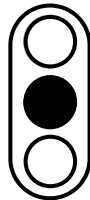
Ready



In this next story we meet the Pharisees – a respected Jewish religious group. They were the ones most committed to keeping the laws and longing for God’s kingdom to come. How will they respond to Jesus? He says he is the one they are waiting for but does he fit their expectations?

In Mark 15 we read the account of the death of Jesus and see why it is necessary for the forgiveness of sins. The story in Mark 2 points to the reality of what Jesus achieved in Mark 15.

Set



Read Mark 2:1-12

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2 They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3 Some men came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. 4 Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralysed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.'

6 Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7 'Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?'

8 Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, 'Why are you thinking these things? 9 Which is easier: to say to this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up, take your mat and walk"? 10 But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' So he said to the man, 11 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' 12 He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

- 1** What do you think the friends of the paralysed man thought his greatest need was? How did Jesus show what the paralysed man's greatest need actually was? What did Jesus see as the man's greatest need and what did the man gain by having it sorted?

Sin is a word used to describe our rebellion against God who made the world and us. It refers to the actions and thoughts we do because of our rebellious nature. The Bible tells us the punishment for unforgiven sin is eternal punishment.

- 2** The Pharisees were so offended by Jesus' claim to forgive sins and therefore claim to be God. Look at verse 9 - How did Jesus show his authority to do what only God can do? What do you make of his claim?

That story that Mark records shows us two very significant things about ourselves and about Jesus.

Our greatest need is not security of wealth or success in sport, or being injury free. Our greatest need is the forgiveness of sins, because that's our greatest sin is our big problem.

Jesus is the only one who can forgive sins because he is the God-man.

The next passage of the bible is the account of Jesus' death – this was the point that Jesus, the God-man died to forgive sins.

Read Mark 15:25-39

²⁵ It was nine in the morning when they crucified him.²⁶ The written notice of the charge against him read: the king of the jews.

²⁷ They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹ Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰ come down from the cross and save yourself!" ³¹ In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself!"³² Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

³³ At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

³⁵ When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

³⁶ Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

³⁷ With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

³⁸ The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹ And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

- 3** Look and see how many different groups of people were mocking Jesus. What were they saying? Why do think Jesus didn't save himself?

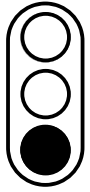
Between 12pm and 3pm darkness covered the land. The Jewish prophets understood darkness during the day as a sign of God's judgement. Jesus was experiencing the judgement of God, being treated as sin deserves.

- 4** In verse 38 we read that the curtain was ripped from top to bottom. What do you think is significant about this?

The temple was a divided by huge curtains to separate different sections. The one great curtain (30m high) separated the main area from the most holy place where only the priest could go once a year. It was a powerful reminder that God was hidden and God was separate from His people because of their sin.

- 5** The Centurion acknowledges something about Jesus that others don't – what is it? What might have caused him to make this cry?

Go



- 6** Having looked at the story of the paralysed man and the account of the death of Jesus what would you say is your greatest need today and what do you make of Jesus?

use the space below to answer these questions

Study 3

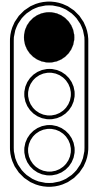
Mark 4:35-41

Sport is full of incredible moments.

**When was the
last time you saw
something amazing
in your sport?**

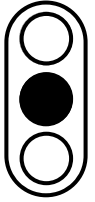


Ready



In the first half of his gospel, Mark is trying to show us the true identity of Jesus. In today's story, Jesus has spent the day teaching and now, at the end of the day, He suggests crossing a lake. He will use this experience to show physically, what he'd been explaining and teaching earlier. Why not have a read of the start of Chapter 4 and then continue with this story.

Set



Read Mark 4:35-41

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

This was a serious storm. The disciples were experienced fishermen and yet we see that their fear of drowning was very real in this storm.

- 1 What impression do we get of the disciples here? How would you describe their feelings?

- 2** Compare the disciples to Jesus. How would you describe his reaction to the situation?

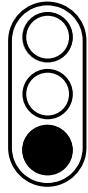
- 3** Who or what was Jesus speaking to in verse 39? What are these words meant to show the disciples?

In verses 40-41 we see the disciples are terrified and frightened. This is not a surprise considering what they have just seen!

- 5** Jesus challenges the disciple's faith in v40. Why does he ask this question?

- 6** The disciples reply with a question of their own – why were they asking this?

Go



- 7** How has this study helped your understanding of Jesus? At the moment how would you answer the question from verse 41: “Who, then is this man?” What are you going to do in response to your answer?

use the space below to answer these questions



Study 4

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43 and Mark 16:1-8

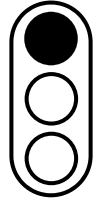
Every sports person has to face the inevitable decline. Age, injuries, change in performance or motivation force all of us to retire and step away from competing at some point. This can be a real challenge as we look to navigate the next phase in life.

In sport retirement is often known as the “first death.” It is called the “first death” because we all know the “second” and final death is on its way.

We struggle to talk about retirement and even more so about death. Why do you think this is?



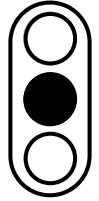
Ready



Jesus has been attracting large crowds and people are travelling to hear him speak and see his miracles. As we've seen, Jesus was reluctant to be known as a healer and yet here, as he is confronted with sickness and death, he heals.

In Mark 16 we read the account of the resurrection of Jesus and see why it is essential to confirm the forgiveness of sins has happened and the promise of new life. The story in Mark 5 points to the reality of what Jesus achieved in Mark 16.

Set



Read Mark 5:21-24

²¹ When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. ²² Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. ²³ He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.” ²⁴ So Jesus went with him.

Jairus was a religious leader, those who were often opposed to Jesus, and yet he falls at Jesus’ feet and begs him to come with him.

- 1 What do Jairus’ actions suggest to us about his situation?

Read Mark 5:25-39

³⁵ While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

³⁶ Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

³⁷ He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. ³⁸ When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”). ⁴² Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. ⁴³ He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Jesus had delayed his arrival at the house of a critically ill child to help a woman who was very poorly. We see during this delay that the child has now died.

- 2** After Jesus eventually arrives he tells Jairus “Do not be afraid, just believe.” What was Jairus being asked to believe about Jesus?

- 3** Jesus speaks to the girl and the unimaginable happens. What does this show us about Jesus?

Faith is an important theme in Mark and it simply means to put our trust and confidence, not in ourselves, but in Jesus as the one who alone can meet our deepest needs.

The woman Jesus healed and Jairus both place their faith in Jesus as they experience their own powerlessness.

Jesus won't always bring the dead back to life if we have faith. So what do you think this story means for us today?

This story is a preview of the most dramatic story in Jesus' life – his resurrection where he came back from the dead. Let's read that account now:

Read Mark 16:1-8

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

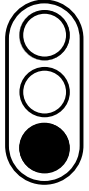
⁶ “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Mark mentions the names of the women in account of the death of Jesus in Chapter 5 and here at the tomb. At that time, a woman’s testimony was seen as unreliable and not accepted in a court of law.

- 4** What do you think the women went to the tomb to do? Why were they shocked?
- 5** Consider the words of the young man dressed in white. How do these words change everything?

Go



- 6** If Jesus was raised from the dead, it changes everything! What questions do you still have about Jesus? What do you think this story means for you today?

use the space below to answer these questions

Study 5

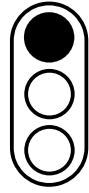
Mark 8:27-38

It takes time to get to know a new coach. To understand their values, their methods, the way they treat people and respond to challenges.

As we've been looking at Jesus, you've seen what he did and what he said. At this stage – what is your opinion of Jesus?

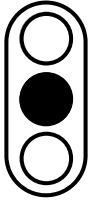


Ready



We've already seen much of Jesus' teaching and miracles. Here we come to a major climax where we find out what Jesus' closest friends thought about who he was.

Set



Read Mark 8:27-30

²⁷ Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, 'Who do people say I am?' ²⁸ They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.' ²⁹ 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?' Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah.'

³⁰ Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

- 1 Jesus often taught and asked questions about himself. Why do you think he did that rather than about what people should do and be like?

Peter calls him 'the Messiah.' Messiah means 'anointed one'. This term refers to God's promised king who would come to save his people.

- 2 The people were expecting God's chosen king to rule powerfully and lead with authority. They were waiting for major political deliverance. How had this expectation shaped their answers to who Jesus was, in verse 28?

Jesus now begins to say some difficult and troubling things.

Read Mark 8:31-33

³¹ He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

³³ But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'

- 3** A King who comes and dies seems quite shameful and confusing. Jesus often talked about his death and resurrection. What do these two events ultimately tell us about Jesus; who he is and what he came to do?

Read Mark 8:34-38

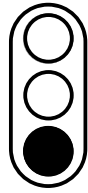
³⁴ Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. ³⁶ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ³⁷ Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? ³⁸ If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”

Jesus now says that not only will he die, but his followers are also to “follow the way of the cross.”

- 4** What do you make of Jesus’ instruction in v34-35

- 5** Jesus then says “what good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” What do you make of this claim from Jesus?

Go



9 If Peter is right about Jesus’ identity as the rescuer and ruler of the world – What does this mean for you?

use the space below to answer these questions



Study 6

Mark 10:35-52

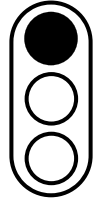
Sport is all about performance.

We have to perform well to get into the next team.
To impress the coach. To get a new contract and to
keep playing.

**How does this
need to constantly
perform in your
sport make you feel?**



Ready



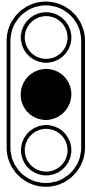
James and John, alongside Peter, were two of Jesus' closest friends.

James and John thought their performances as Jesus' close friends would earn them a high status in Jesus' kingdom.

In so many areas of our lives we are told that if we work hard and perform well, we will get what we deserve.

The problem is, when it comes to faith, we can never work hard enough to be good enough for God. We saw that in study 2. We can never earn our way into God's good books because the greatest problem (sin) acts as a barrier. It is not about what we do or 'how good' we are.

Set



Read Mark 10:35-45

³⁵ Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. ‘Teacher,’ they said, ‘we want you to do for us whatever we ask.’ ³⁶ ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ he asked. ³⁷ They replied, ‘Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.’ ³⁸ ‘You don’t know what you are asking,’ Jesus said. ‘Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with?’ ³⁹ ‘We can,’ they answered. Jesus said to them, ‘You will drink the cup I drink and be baptised with the baptism I am baptised with, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.’ ⁴¹ When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. ⁴² Jesus called them together and said, ‘You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ⁴³ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ 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.’

- 1 James and John ask Jesus for honour and power. What does this show us of how they understood Jesus?

When Jesus talks about the ‘cup’ and ‘baptism’ he is talking about his death.

- 2 Why do you think the other disciples would have been annoyed at their request?

- 3** Why do you think the other disciples would have been annoyed at their request?

The word ‘ransom’ in verse 45 refers to the sum of money needed to free someone from slavery if they were in debt.

- 4** What new thing do we learn about how Jesus understood what he was on earth to do?
- 5** What do you make of the fact Jesus is calling you a slave who needs freeing, not a person who needs to perform?

Now we meet a blind man, Bartimaeus, who responds in contrast to James and John.

Read Mark 10:46-52

⁴⁶ Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means 'son of Timaeus'), was sitting by the roadside begging. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁸ Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' ⁴⁹ Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' So they called to the blind man, 'Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you.' ⁵⁰ Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ 'What do you want me to do for you?' Jesus asked him. The blind man said, 'Rabbi, I want to see.' ⁵² 'Go,' said Jesus, 'your faith has healed you.' Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

This is the last healing in Mark's account of Jesus' life. Bartimaeus calls Jesus 'the son of David' – this is another way of calling him the Messiah.

- 6** Jesus asks Bartimaeus the same question he asked James and John – "What do you want me to do?" What does Bartimaeus' response here reveal about how he viewed both himself and Jesus?

Bartimaeus recognised he didn't deserve anything and he cried out for mercy. Jesus responded by healing him and commending his faith.

Go



It is only through faith, through trusting in Jesus, that we can be saved and ultimately healed. There is nothing we can do to earn this or any performance we can bring which he will reward us for. It is only through God's mercy that we can be forgiven.

7 Do you trust in Jesus today – if so, why? If not, Why not?

use the space below to answer these questions

What now?

Mark says this is “good news” and Jesus asks you “who do you say I am?”

Now you’ve read Mark’s gospel and looked at it in depth – what do you make of Mark’s claim and Jesus’ question?

It may be that you want to accept Jesus’ invitation to put your trust in him. A prayer like this might help you begin speaking to Jesus about what you have come to believe and want to accept for yourself:

Jesus, please help me to believe as you helped the disciples to. I am sorry that I have lived for myself for so long. Thank you that you came, lived, and died for me so I can be forgiven. I want to trust and obey you. Amen.

If you have decided to follow Jesus, tell a Christian you know (maybe someone who read this with you) and if you can, find a local church where you can meet others who have also discovered Jesus and put their trust in him.

You can find further resources, including a selection of Bible studies about being a Christian in the world of sport at:
christiansinsport.org.uk/academy



**‘But what
about you?’
he asked.
‘Who do you
say I am?’**

