

Aim of lesson

To show that the elements of the gospel as identified in the previous topic have always been taught by God and believed by faithful men and women.

Bible background

Hebrews 11, and many other passages.

Preparation required

Think through the points you want the young people to grasp, especially as shown in the lives of the faithful in Hebrews 11, some of whose 'works' were not exemplary.

Suggested outline of lesson

Remind the young people of the elements of the gospel that were identified last week.

Hebrews 11 is a catalogue of those who believed the gospel and responded. Select two or three to show that they understood the elements of the gospel and responded to that message e.g. Abraham, Moses and Abel. These will form the basis of the rest of the study, and the young people should find conclusions like these:

The Garden of Eden: Genesis 3: 7-10, 15, 21, 24; 4:3-7, 16; Hebrews 11:4

Cannot save selves	Their fig leaves were not enough.
Forgiveness	God covered their nakedness.
Promises	Eve was promised that her descendant would destroy the seed of the serpent.
Faith	It was by faith that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain - perhaps he knew that Cain would kill him.
Response	Abel was obedient.
Guidance	Adam and Eve, Cain (until he murdered his brother) and Abel, still lived in God's presence (Genesis 4:14,16).
Saviour	God provided a lamb which had to die so that their nakedness could be covered.
Restoration	The way to the tree of life was kept (the word 'guard' in Genesis 3:24 is the same as in 2:15, where the man is put into the garden of Eden to 'keep' (NIV 'take care') of it.

Abraham: Genesis 12:1-4; 15:4-7; 22:7-14; John 8:56; Romans 4:16-22; Hebrews 11:8-19.

Cannot save selves	In Ur he would have died without hope, and he did not know the way to the promised land.
Forgiveness	His faith was counted as righteousness.
Promises	God promised to bring him into a better land.
Faith	Abraham believed, ...
Response	... and left Ur.

Guidance	God showed him the way
Saviour	'God will provide a lamb' ... 'Abraham rejoiced to see my day'.
Restoration	Abraham believed in resurrection and looked to 'a heavenly country'.

Exodus: Exodus 3:7-10; 12:21-23; 14:13-16; Isaiah 63:12-14; Joshua 21:43-45

Cannot save selves	Israel were slaves in Egypt and had no way of escape.
Forgiveness	God provided a lamb, by whose sacrifice they could escape death.
Promises	God promised to bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey.
Faith	They had to believe his promise.
Response	They had to enter the house with the blood of the lamb on its door, and then walk out of Egypt, and through the waters of the Dead Sea.
Guidance	God guided them through the wilderness.
Saviour	God provided Moses to lead them.
Restoration	They were brought to the promised land.

Relevance to our lives

It is easy for young people to get the impression that to follow Jesus you have to be 'good', to have overcome all personal problems, and to know everything there is to know about the Bible. It is very important that they should understand that these things, insofar as we ever achieve them, are the response of faith, not a requirement for salvation - and certainly not for baptism.

Prayer

Lord God of Abraham, the God of all those who were faithful, help us to hear your word and place our trust in you. Amen

Other suggestions for activities

The young people might like to consider the faith and trust that a young child has in its parent and show what our faith in God should be like.

This analogy can be extended to show how wanting to please our father is a natural follow on.