



Leaping
with God
**CONNECT
GROUPS**

Connect Bible Study Questions
Lent 1/February 2024
(4 Feb - 2 March)

Introduction

Every month we have a God-given theme delving into different aspects and areas of faith. Over the course of 2024 these themes connect and take us on a faith journey out into the wonders of life with Jesus. The following discussion questions adapt our theme for small Connect Bible study groups or for individual discipleship and we have additional resources in our monthly resource packs for daily and deeper reflection (check out this month's: [here.](#)).

Each weekly session has questions and thoughts which correspond with our Daily Worship and Sunday Live topics. Our hope is you can use these Connect sessions as best fits your situation and discussions, so as presented or as your conversations lead with all the freedom to pick and adapt as you need. We love to hear how or indeed if, these materials are helping you grow in your faith and walk with Jesus, so please let us know!

Theme

This leap year we are going to ask what it means to leap with God!

The phrase 'leap of faith' can have a bit of a sense of desperation to it can't it? A mad dash and jump to the other side! "Ooft, I made it!" But what if most of the 'leaps of faith' that we make in our journey of discipleship with God aren't wild lunges, but more like the leaps made by an athlete, or a child excitedly playing a game! Made enthusiastically and for the love of it!

We leap to follow God in hope and expectation — leaping into the Kingdom! Athletes need focus, practice, folk cheering them on, and people to coach them, and to catch them when they fall. All the same applies in discipleship! The leaps of faith we make are not made alone — just as even elite solo jumpers have whole support teams to enable them to perform at their best.

When we leap, we leap with others. Just like a child playing a game trying again and again while our friends help us. We leap to get somewhere, we leap for fun, we leap for adventure! This Lent let's make leaps of faith with our eyes wide open. Not leaps of desperation but leaps of gladness, faith and enthusiasm as we follow where God is leading us.

This year, let's leap into Lent!

Seeds to sow

Each week begins with a seed to sow conversation starter. These are open-ended prompts to inspire creative responses to the themes. Perhaps they will inspire you to write a song or a poem, or to paint, draw, move or explore! They are short and sweet, simply a starting off place for you and your imagination. Expand, tailor and develop as suits you.

Format

Each week is split into three question sections. We imagine the material could be the basis for a 90 minute session but feel free to adapt to your group and rearrange the order or adapt the content to suit you.

Connect Group videos

Each month we film a series of short videos discussing the questions for each week:
sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/connect/leaping-with-god-connect-groups

Week 1: Leaping into life with God

Introduction:

What if 'a leap of faith' is not a mad desperate dash? But more like the practiced leap of an athlete, who with training and encouragement is going to stretch themselves to go that bit further? Like athletes we don't leap alone, we have the support of others who can help us prepare. Over our lives of discipleship we make all kinds of leaps of faith as we learn to trust God and one another. For the jumper on the track and the disciple on the road: focus and motivation are hugely important. Who are we leaping towards and why? Why leap with God and after God? Why bother!?

Seeds to sow: What are some of the small 'leaps of faith' that we make in our daily walk with God?

Video: sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/connect/watch/leaping-with-god-connect-groups/292

1) Isaiah 40: 28-31

All this month we are thinking about leaping with God. But who *is* God?

What do we learn about God from this reading?

2) 1 John 3: 1-3

Who are we to God — God's children!

God loves to see us leap and grow the way a loving parent delights in their children.

What can this reading tell us about God's love for us?

3) Romans 10: 1-13

As a group, how about we take time for — anyone who wants to — to share a story of a time in their life when they have responded to God?



Week 2: Leaping into Prayer

Introduction:

When watching competitive swimmers we get to see the rhythms of breathing and moving gracefully and powerfully through the water! There is a well practiced drill of when to turn the head and breathe, often knowing how long they can wait before needing to breathe. If it is too long it hinders the performance due to a lack of oxygen. There is a basic need to breathe! To inhale with the head out of the water and exhale usually in the water. If we think about prayer as the water we swim through in life of faith it can help us understand the rhythms within prayer. The swimmer dives into the water. This week we take a diving leap into prayer.

Seeds to sow: You could find time this week to sit and read Matthew 4: 1-11 a few times and then dive into some time of open-ended prayer with God.

Video: sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/connect/watch/leaping-with-god-connect-groups/288

1) Matthew 4: 1-11

Going into the wilderness can sound a bit scary, like diving into an open water swim - you know it is going to be cold!

When we stand and look at diving into prayer, how do we feel about it?

3) Matthew 4: 18-22

Persevere following Jesus in prayer, it might start to look or feel different as our prayer life deepens, but keep on praying, this is the way! The disciples didn't tread water, they didn't stay where they were in their faith.

What helps us not to tread water but to keep on swimming in our lives of prayer?

2) Matthew 4: 1-11 (again!)

The swimmer dives into the water. We dive into — leap into — prayer! We need to inhale by listening and taking in what God says to us in prayer and we exhale, giving out to God in prayer — sometimes with puffed out cheeks from the depths of our lungs! To build a rhythm swimmers work on a pattern of inhaling and exhaling.

How could we apply those principles of taking in and letting go to a time of prayer?



Week 3: Leaping into the Bible

Introduction:

Watching cyclists fix their bikes at the side of the trail during a race can be so inspiring! To see them manage their adrenaline and know how to use their tools to solve problems and get going! But it isn't just cyclists who know how to use the tools of their trade. Bakers know just which cake tins or spoons to use, musicians which instruments to achieve the sound they are aiming for. There are lots of different areas in our lives where knowing how to use the tools of our trade is essential to living well. It is the same with our faith and this week we want to get to know the tool of our Bibles better. The Bible is of course much more than a 'tool' (like it is more than a book!) but, like a handy gadget for the cyclist at the roadside, the Bible is a fantastic resource in our faith toolkit. So, what exactly is the equipment of our faith we pick up when we open the Bible? What kind of tool is the Bible, and how does it grow the muscles of our faith?

Seeds to sow: What books of the Bible do you find yourself going back to time and again? If you've not read the Bible before, or not for a long time, what parts interest or intrigue you?

Video: <https://www.sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/connect/watch/leaping-with-god-connect-groups/290>

1) Psalm 19: 7-11

The enthusiasm and passion shines through these ancient words but some of the terms and imagery are odd and unusual!

How do you feel reading these words?
How do we make sense of them?

3) 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

How do we connect with the Bible as inspired from God? How is it similar and different to other books?

2) Ephesians 6: 11-17

What are our experiences of the word of God being the 'sword of the spirit'? Have there been any occasions when specific scriptures have helped you?



Week 4: Leaping into Action

Introduction:

This theme we have leapt a lot on our own but this last week we consider that faith is not an individual sport or activity. Our life of faith is a team sport where we encourage and depend on one another. Watching synchronised divers we see how they know what the slightest movement means, when the other is going to turn, and they trust the other to do their best. Quite inspirational! When we leap and keep on leaping into faith we are not on our own, Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit and we have others around us, to help and be helped by. We all have an important role with and for one another. This is the beauty of the Body of Jesus, so let's leap together!

Seeds to sow: How does movement play a part in your faith?

Video: sanctuaryfirst.org.uk/connect/watch/leaping-with-god-connect-groups/289

1) Matthew 20: 20-28

The Thunder Brothers* and their mum are trying to pull ahead, perhaps thinking it is for the good of the wider team, but going right across the grain of Jesus's mission. Not all jumps are worth the leap!

What are the pitfalls we can encounter when leaping together and how can we help each other overcome them?

* *Thunder brothers...? Check out Mark 3: 17*

3) Romans 12: 9-21

How can we be God's love in action for others this week?

2) Romans 12: 1-8

This passage highlights how we all have something of value to share with our fellow believers, we are all different and complement each other.

Do you know your gifts?

How can these inspiring words motivate us to be team players for team Jesus this week?

