**Bible study on John 1:(1-9),10-18**

**A promise made real**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Light of the world, shine upon us.
We gather, in the glow of your love
and the warmth of our fellowship,
to draw courage and guidance
for the year ahead.
**Amen.**

 **Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

**10**He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11**He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12**Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— **13**children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

**14**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

**15**(John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) **16**Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. **17**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18**No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%201&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26063b)] is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

 **Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

The wonderful passage at the beginning of John sets the scene for the rest of his Gospel. It is commonly called the ‘prologue of John’ because it functions similarly to the opening scenes in a play, outlining the key players and the unseen forces and powers. The setting is the whole of creation, rather than the geographical location that Jesus takes up in his ministry on earth. The passage points to the creator God, who, in the second person of the Trinity causes the earth to exist and sustains it – ‘in the beginning’ is a deliberate reference to Genesis 1:1. The theme of John’s Gospel is guiding people to see the God of the beginning of creation as the same God who became human and walked among them. There is also a spiritual element that is set up in verse 5 when the light overcomes the darkness. This is not only the darkness in the void before creation but also other elements that, as the rest of the Gospel declares, will be overcome by Jesus Christ. Then there is a dramatic shift (v.6) from the whole of creation to a particular person, God’s messenger, John. Like Moses and the prophets, John points towards God’s presence, appearing in flesh and blood on earth and not just in the spiritual realms. Not all will recognise this, however (vv.10-11).

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

‘He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.’ (John 1:10-11) This failure of recognition must have been painful to Jesus, and frustrating. Perhaps you or members of the congregation have had experiences that can be shared of good intentions being ignored. Maybe there have also been times when you or they have failed to recognise good things that are on offer and have passed you/them by. How do these experiences resonate with the harsh reality that Jesus faced in being God’s promise to the world? What are the realities for the Church of trying to present that promise to the world today?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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| A person handing a key to a person  Description automatically generated |  |

**Questions**

* What’s the biggest promise you’ve ever made? Did you fulfil it?
* Why do we sometimes find it hard to keep promises?
* At the start of a new year, what promises from God do you want to hold tight to?

**Prayer**

Almighty God, praise be to you.
We give you thanks for the blessings you have poured out upon us,
for the difference you have made to our lives.
For gifts beyond measure: not the gold, frankincense and myrrh
the wise men brought to Jesus at Epiphany,
but gifts of forgiveness way beyond what we deserve,
for love everlasting, light in our darkness and hope in our despair.
Almighty God, **praise be to you.**
We give thanks for the constancy of your being, eternal,
unchanging, reliable and secure, which grounds us
when life around us seems constantly in flux.
Almighty God, **praise be to you.**We give thanks for the glimpses we catch of you unexpectedly
as we go about our daily living.
Glimpses in the light and in the dark.
Glimpses that uphold and sustain us.
Almighty God, **praise be to you.**
**Amen.**

**A prayer to end the Bible study**

As we savour the presents of Christmas
and begin to make them part of our lives –
things to use, to wear, to play with –
so may we savour and use
the blessings we have unwrapped
in the gift of Jesus,
**and make his promise real in our lives.**
**Amen.**