

WORDS FOR THE WISE

nine sessions on the book of James



The Crusader Union is a Bible-based, interdenominational Christian youth organisation, whose vision is to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ to students in the Independent Schools of Australia, to nurture Christians and to encourage church membership.

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WELCOME

This resource has been specifically written with school groups in mind but can be adapted depending on your needs. It is based on the group running for approximately 30 minutes each meeting.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 9 sets of leader's notes for regular meetings. The leader's notes provide the aim of the study, a fun activity, discussion questions (with notes to help answer some questions) and prayer ideas.
- 9 student pages for regular meetings. The student pages can be photocopied and handed out if so desired. Each sheet contains the Bible passage (NIV) and discussion questions.
- 2 colour advertising posters designed to grab the attention of students and help increase awareness of your group. There is space for you to fill in your group name and where you meet. We encourage schools to use the 'CRU School Groups' logo when promoting their group so as to link students with the work that God is doing in other schools.

BEFORE YOU START

- Please note that all pages in this resource can be photocopied but Crusaders request each school or church purchase at least one original.
- Whilst this resource is aimed at easing the load for the group leader, it is vital that time is spent adapting it to the specific needs of your group. Time also needs to be spent on working through the Bible passage and questions before the group meets.
- A variety of video clips and other resources are used in this series. All resources, including video clips, should be checked before the meeting to make sure they are appropriate for your group and there are no technical problems. The resources can be accessed from the Web Extras section of the CRU website:

www.crusaders.edu.au/school-ministry/resources/web-extras/

- It would be very easy to spend too much time on the activity each week. Remember that looking at the Bible and praying together are the most important parts of the meeting, so divide your time accordingly.
- Note that there is no outreach meeting in this resource. As a result you may like to take the opportunity to organise an event where your CRU Group will bless the school as an alternative form of outreach.

We pray that this resource will be a great help as you join in God's work of bringing students to Himself and growing them to be like His Son.

"We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom,
so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.
To this end I labour, struggling with all His energy which so powerfully works in me."
Colossians 1:28–29

WORDS FOR THE WISE

Week	Title	Passage	Main Idea
1	Gettin' Wise	James 1:1-8	Wisdom to face life and its trials comes from God.
2	Livin' Wise	James 1:22-27	Don't just hear God's word, do it!
3	God's Favourites?	James 2:1-9	God calls us to love and care for all people.
4	Are You All Talk?	James 2:14-26	Faith in Jesus must result in good deeds.
5	Watch Your Mouth	James 3:1-12	Our words have great power for good or evil.
6	You Can't Do It Alone	James 4:4-10	God calls us to humble ourselves and live His way.
7	God Owns Tomorrow	James 4:13-17	Make your plans in the knowledge that God is in charge.
8	Be Patient	James 5:7-11	Be patient, because God is going to work.
9	Get Praying!	James 5:13	We should pray in faith in all circumstances.

AIM

For students to seek wisdom from God to face life and its trials.

PREPARE

- Pray as you prepare that God's will might be done and the students will be drawn closer to Him.
- Read through James 1:1-8, familiarising yourself with the context and content of the passage.
- Photocopy the Week 1 Students' page for everyone (p.22).
- Print and prepare a copy of the Web Extras document, 'Match the Wisdom'.
- Ensure you have the facilities to show the Web Extras video 'Famous Last Words'.

WATCH

Begin by explaining that today you're going to be thinking about wisdom and to help discover what wisdom is not, you will show them the following video.

Show the Web Extras video 'Famous Last Words' (1 min 40 secs).

FUN ACTIVITY

Match the Wisdom

Using the Web Extras document 'Match the Wisdom', ask your group to match the right piece of wisdom with the right situation.

When they have finished ask them to select the worst piece of wisdom for any given situation. See what the funniest pieces of advice they can give are.

Explain that today in your CRU Group you are starting a series on the book of James. James is a book full of practical wisdom for living the way God calls us to. Wisdom is about applying God's truth in the right way in any situation.

While the book of James is full of great advice for the Christian to apply in the right situations, today we will begin by looking at how wisdom is gained in the first place and how it can be useful in even the hardest times.

READ

It seems that James, Jesus' brother, wrote this letter and that he only become a Christian after Jesus rose from the dead. James wrote to a group of Christians who were facing hard times.

Read James 1:1-8

DISCUSS

1 James starts off the passage by telling his readers to consider trials "pure joy" (v2). Why do you think he does this? Should we go out looking for hardship?

James' reason is that it is through trials that God makes His people mature and complete. God is making us more like Jesus. This doesn't mean that we have to love hardship, but it does mean we can rejoice that the end result of hardship is God's good work in our lives.

It also doesn't mean we have to go looking for hardship. God knows what we can handle and when it's best for us. To go looking for hardship for its own sake is just foolish.



2 Why is wisdom important? How does it relate to trials?

As we said before wisdom is the ability to apply God's truth in the right way in any situation. This is why it is important to spend time in God's word, so that we can learn God's truth. As we do this we will find that whenever we face tricky situations we will have a well of truth to draw on. As we make wise choices by drawing on God's truth we can live a life that is more in keeping with God's desire for us.

In the case of trials, wisdom is the key ingredient to letting trials mature us rather than make us bitter. It can do this because wisdom provides a clear view of our situation from God's perspective. Instead of being so caught up in what is happening in the moment we can see better what God is doing in the big picture.

Not only this, but through trials, as we trust God, we see how God looks after us. Through recognising this we gain more wisdom.

3 How can you get wisdom?

Pray. James tells us to ask for wisdom, and God will give generously without finding fault. This means that God wants to give us wisdom. He doesn't hold back because of our past sins. He gives, because He is a generous father.

James also says that we should ask without doubting. This means that we ask for things trusting in the loving, character of God. This doesn't mean that we can't ask a parent, friend or wise person for advice and help. It does mean, however, that God knows best and so we need to rely on Him and earnestly seek His truth.

4 Jesse is going through a hard time both at home and at school. How can you use the teaching of this passage to help him? In what ways should you be careful about using the passage?

This passage is helpful because it promises us that God uses hard times to help make us into the people that God wants us to be. Through trials we will be given characters that lack nothing. Knowing this you could encourage Jesse that God doesn't let any situation go to waste. He will be with Jesse even in the hard times, using them for good.

You should be careful however, because the passage could be used badly. It would be wrong to tell Jesse to cheer up and enjoy what was happening to him. It would also be wrong to see Jesse's sadness about the situation as sinful because James tell us to consider trials pure joy. Sadness is not incompatible with joy.

It would be best to be Jesse's friend and pray for him that God would be with him, would give him the wisdom to see His goodness even in the midst of hard times and to grow in his maturity as a follower of Jesus.

PRAY

Encourage the group to break into pairs and pray for each other that they might have wisdom and be able to endure the trials they face in life with joy, knowing that God will use them for their good.

You may also like to use the time to have the students listen to "Bring it On" by Steven Curtis Chapman and reflect on the lyrics.