

Wow!

**Praise
God!**

Ephesians

**God's
BIG
amazing
plan!**

Genius!

**How
amazing!**

Notes for 15 family bible times in
Ephesians to help us all get to know
God and his BIG amazing plan

Paul's letter to the Ephesians: Praise God for his BIG amazing plan!

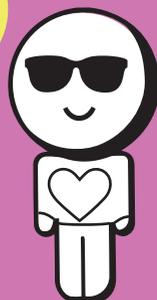
What spans ALL of time, and ALL of space, and EVERYONE in the universe? What is the BEST thing that is happening in the world? What is the REALLY important role we can play?

Well, in Ephesians, we're going to hear about God's BIG amazing plan. It's the most wonderful plan and the best thing that is happening in the universe!

Sometimes, it can be really hard being a Christian. We might think 'Is being a Christian really that great?', 'Is it worth sticking with Jesus?'

Well, we're going to see that it's TOTALLY worth it. Ephesians will show us how to stand strong. Paul, the man who wrote Ephesians, spends his whole letter telling us about the BIG amazing plan that God is working out. It's a plan God wants us to know deeply, to then live out and therefore to stand strong as Christians.

Hooray!



Using the material – a guide for parents

We hope you enjoy digging into Paul's letter to the Ephesians with your family – it is a wonderfully rich letter! We've tried to make these family bible times as clear and as simple as possible but this does mean there will be a lot of detail that we miss out. In each bible time, we'll aim to focus on one big thing about God's big plan. In the first half of the letter this will be something to **know** about the plan and in the second half this will be some way we **live** in our knowledge of the plan, which together help us to **stand strong**.

Each family bible time has 5 small parts:

What are we thinking about today? - An thought, illustration or question to introduce the 'big thing' we'll be thinking about

Read - A few verses to read from the passage

Look - Something to spot in one of the verses to point out the 'big thing'

Think - Questions of increasing depth to help us think why we need to know the 'big thing'

Pray - A suggestion of how to pray in response to the 'big thing' in the passage

You may like to do one study a week, or could use them each day for a couple of weeks e.g. while you're away on holiday. You can cover as much of the study as you feel able to with the age and attention span of your children.

Here are some ideas:

- For small children, you might choose to just look at the introduction, the first 'look' question and then to pray.
- Slightly older children might be able to look at one of the 'think' questions too, and the oldest may manage to cover all the questions.
- If you have older children, who want to go further than the study, you could read the rest of the passage (full passage indicated in top right corner) with them and think together what it adds to our understanding of the 'big thing' we've seen about God's big plan.

For those who have been able to attend St Helen's Sunday School, this booklet should come with some crafts for your children. The scratch-art glasses are particularly useful as a visual aid for study 4 (and for the rest of the first half of Ephesians). The t-shirt keyring is loosely tied study 11 and the second half of the book where we hear about 'living out' what we know. The pictures in this booklet are designed to be coloured in too.

1. God has a BIG amazing plan... Let's praise him!

What are we thinking about today?

Have you ever heard anyone say “here's the plan”? Maybe your Mum or Dad have said something like “here's the plan; today we are going to go to the beach. We need to pack our bags, get in the car and drive to the beach. When we get there we'll go for a swim”. Well we're going to be hearing about a plan that is WAY more exciting than going to the beach. It's way more exciting than any other plans we might have. In Ephesians, God is telling us about his plan – his BIG amazing plan. It's the biggest and most exciting thing that is happening in the world!

READ

Ephesians 1:3 and 11-12

LOOK

Who is being praised in verse 3?

Look a bit closer... Can you spot 3 more times the word 'praise' pops up in verses 1-14?

Praise means to go 'WOW!' at who God is and what he's done. It's us telling him how amazing he is. In Ephesians, we're hearing all about God's BIG amazing plan. This plan shows us how amazing he is. As we look at his plan we will see why we should go WOW!

THINK

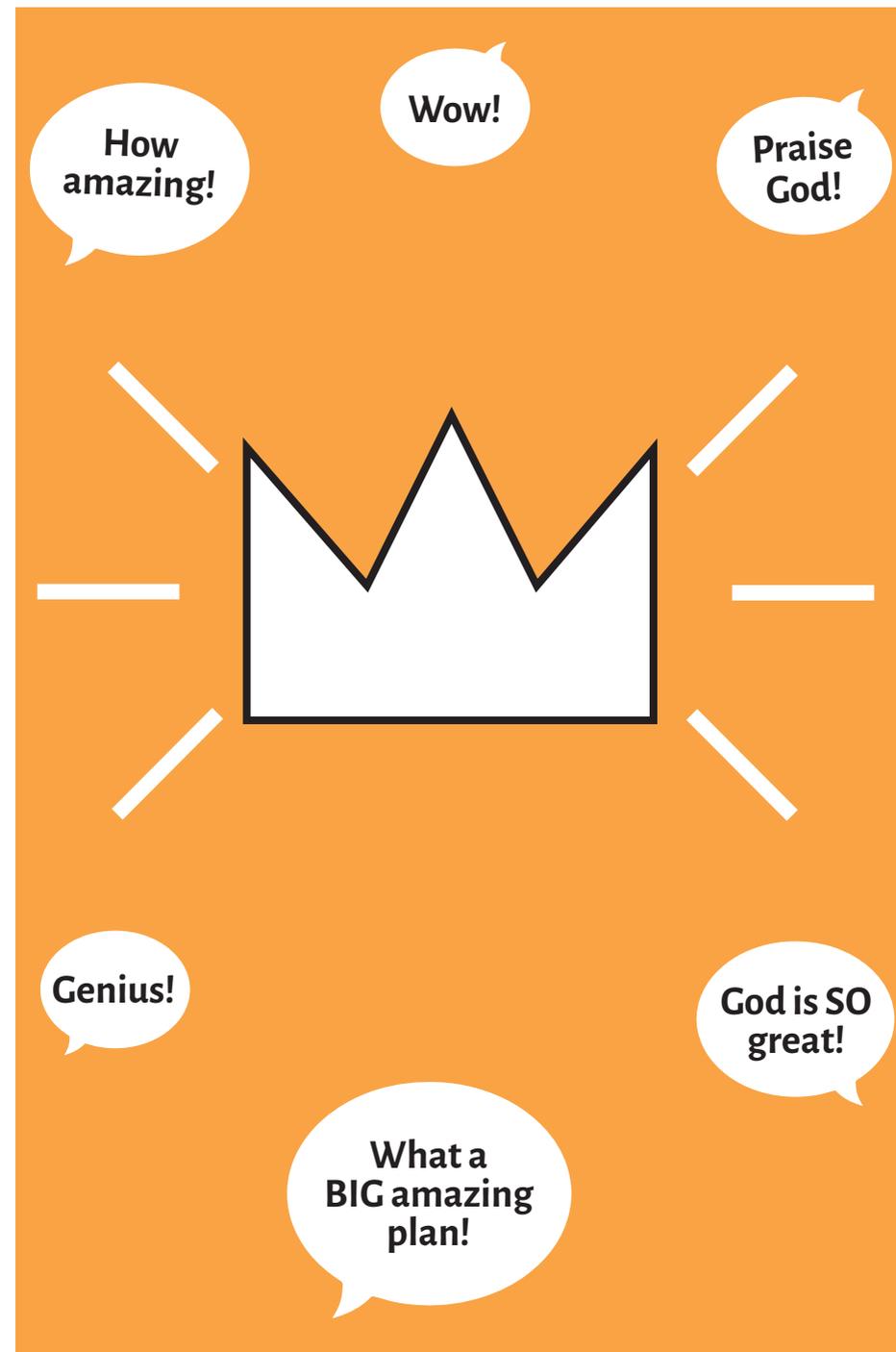
Hm... Why is it exciting that God wants to tell us about his big amazing plan?

Hmm... Why might God's plan be more exciting than anything else that is happening in the world?

Hmmm... How could knowing God's plan help us to praise him?

PRAY

Let's ask God to help us praise him as we hear about his BIG amazing plan.



2. God has a BIG amazing plan... Jesus makes it happen

What are we thinking about today?

Think about all the things that need electricity or batteries to work in your house. How many things can you think of? The lights, the TV, maybe even some of your toys? With all these things nothing would happen if there wasn't any electricity or batteries. It's a bit like that with God's plan. There is a really amazing person who makes it all happen.

We've seen already that God has a BIG amazing plan. In these verses (1:1-14) we're getting a BIG picture of God's plan. We saw that the plan will show us how amazing God is and make us want to praise him. But today we're going to see who it is that makes this plan happen. The one who puts it into action.

READ

Ephesians 1:9-10

LOOK

Who, in verse 9 is God's plan purposed (made to happen) through?

Look a bit closer... Can you see anywhere else in verses 1-14 where something happens through Jesus? Look for where it says

God's will is what he wants to happen; in other words, his plan. Here we see that this BIG plan is "purposed through" Jesus Christ. That means the whole plan happens through him.

THINK

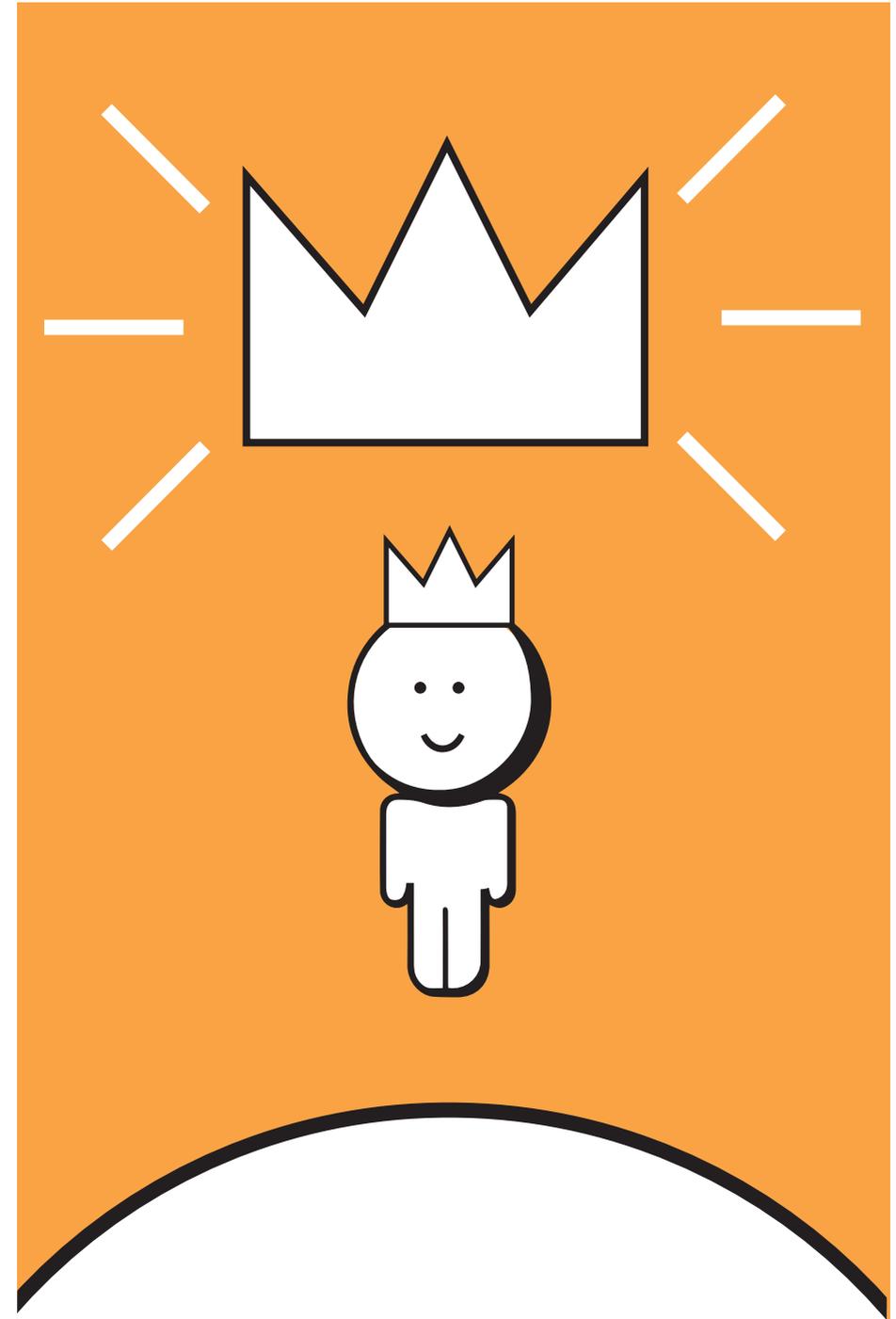
Hm... What does this tell us about how important Jesus is?

Hmm... If God's plan couldn't happen without Jesus, how can this help us to praise God for him?

Hmmm... Verse 10 says that the plan Jesus makes happen affects all of time and all things in the universe. How does this help us to understand EVEN MORE how important Jesus is?

PRAY

Let's praise God for Jesus.



3. God has a BIG amazing plan... We get to be part of it!

What are we thinking about today?

Can you think of the best party you've ever been a guest at? Why was it so great? Being at someone else's party can be so much fun, even though it's not even your birthday. You might get to eat lots of yummy food and take home some tasty cake. There might be lots of fun things to do at the party and you might even get a party bag to take home. It's even better if it's your friend's party because then you're also getting to hang out with them! Well it's a little bit like that with God's BIG amazing plan. We should praise God for his plan, and it all happens through Jesus BUT... it's also really amazing for us. We get to be part of it!

READ

Ephesians 1:3-5

LOOK

How much does Paul say God has blessed us?

Look a bit closer...In verse 5, what does Paul say is one of the ways God has blessed us?

In God's plan we are immensely blessed. Blessed means God shows amazingly kind love towards us in what he gives us and does for us. A blessing is a way God shows his kindness. But what God gives us isn't a great big pile of stuff. No, his blessings are WAY better than that.

THINK

Hm...God has decided his plan is one in which he shows us amazing kindness and blesses us by giving us the best things in the universe. How does that make you feel?

Hmm...We saw in verse 5 that one of the ways God blesses us is by making us his children. Why is that SO kind?

Hmmm...If you have more time choose another blessing from the passage and think 'why is it so kind of God to give us this?'

PRAY

Let's thank God for his kindness towards us in his plan.

