

# n u o

A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON FAITH



GUIDE

# Contents

- 02 What Is NUA?
- 02 Why Was NUA Made?
- 03 About This Guide
- 04 Guide Elements
- 05 Tips on Leading NUA
- 06 Chapter One // *How Did We Get Here?*
  - NUA 1.1 - Has the Universe Always Existed?
  - NUA 1.2 - Is God in the Details?
  - NUA 1.3 - What Does This Life Mean?
- 12 Chapter Two // *Jesus: Fact or Fiction?*
  - NUA 2.1 - Was Jesus the Real Deal?
  - NUA 2.2 - How Can I trust What the Bible Says?
  - NUA 2.3 - Why Should I Believe the Bible?
- 18 Chapter Three // *What About The Resurrection?*
  - NUA 3.1 - How Did Jesus Die?
  - NUA 3.2 - Did Jesus Defeat Death?
  - NUA 3.3 - Do the Facts Stack Up?
- 24 Chapter Four // *What Was Jesus Really Like?*
  - NUA 4.1 - What Was Jesus Really Like?
  - NUA 4.2 - Does God Notice Me?
  - NUA 4.3 - Is it OK to Doubt?
- 30 Chapter Five // *Why Do I Like Jesus, But Struggle With Christians?*
  - NUA 5.1 - What is Authentic Faith?
  - NUA 5.2 - Do Christians Just Follow Rules?
  - NUA 5.3 - Are Christians Out of Touch?
- 36 Chapter Six // *How Can You Say That God Is Good?*
  - NUA 6.1 - Where Was God?
  - NUA 6.2 - Why Did it Happen to Me?
  - NUA 6.3 - Will it All Be Worth it?
- 42 Chapter Seven // *Has The Church Caused More Harm Than Good?*
  - NUA 7.1 - Why Are Churches so Messed Up?
  - NUA 7.2 - Am I better Off Without Church?
  - NUA 7.3 - Can I belong in Church?
- 48 Chapter Eight // *What's Jesus Got To Do With Me?*
  - NUA 8.1 - Can Jesus Affect my Life?
  - NUA 8.2 - How Much Am I worth?
  - NUA 8.3 - What will you choose?
- 54 Chapter Nine // *Are you Ready To Take The Next Step?*
- 56 Chapter Ten // *How Can I Tell Others?*

## What Is NUA?

NUA / nu: ^ / noo-ah / Language of origin: Irish adjective, meaning “new”.

NUA is all about exploration: it’s a film series that encourages questions, acknowledges doubt, and offers an engaging perspective on the Christian faith.

NUA equips you with the ability to intelligently explore and understand what you believe. We provide tools for you to discuss your worldview with credibility and confidence, while encouraging you to wrestle with the things that just don’t seem to make sense. Ultimately, this film series is about impact – immediate and personal, as well as the long-term, life-changing experience of working out your beliefs.

## Why Was NUA Made?

NUA comes from many years spent with people, listening to their questions. Doubt is the result of an active, engaged mind interested in seeking truth – something we love to see! So we set out to help young adults dig deeper as they explore faith and spirituality.

**Doubt is the result of an active, engaged mind interested in seeking truth - something we love to see!**

NUA was written, reviewed, and edited by more than 30 trusted critics, including a small inter-church theological group, chaplains, clergy, youth and pastoral workers, parents, and a focus group of young adults. This project required a substantial financial investment and was filmed by one of the best creative video agencies in Dublin, along with a renowned Irish-based director. The team combined their unique creative abilities to invest in people’s ‘journey of faith’.



## About This Guide

The NUA Guide is a resource for facilitators. As you present the series to participants, use these step-by-step materials to inspire engagement along the way. We've designed the guide to give you as much support as possible. There are suggested questions, ideas for group activities, and NUA challenges.

This guide is not meant to dictate the way you present NUA—we want you to make the experience your own. Take it, mold it, and make it work for your audience.

**Make the  
experience  
your own.**

In addition to this printed guide, we've also provided NUA Training Videos. These two-minute clips are great for refreshing your memory before presenting a session, allowing you to mentally prepare in a short space of time.

## Guide Elements

**Chapter Summaries:** If you're short on time or need a quick reminder of the session content, these summaries are for you. We've also included Bible references from each Chapter—check them out individually or ask the participants to read them in their own time.

*FYI: We used a variety of Bible translations throughout the series.*

**Engagement Ideas:** These suggestions are meant to supplement your session. We know it may be a challenge to get participants talking—so check out our ideas for pulling more out of your groups.

**Small Group Questions:** We encourage you to discuss before and after the video you are using. We've provided three question options per video.

**Reflection:** NUA is designed to provoke questions. Encourage your participants to practice written reflection. We hope each session results in an exchange of ideas and individual growth..

**NUA Challenge:** We also want NUA to encourage practical responses. Each Chapter includes a challenge, which asks participants to live out the things they're learning. We're bridging the gap between digital and everyday life.

## Tips on Leading NUA

We encourage you to make NUA work best for your setting and group. Whether you are running this with your Sunday School class, youth group, small group, at a school or on a college or university campus - we invite you to make your space comfortable for sharing and reflecting. Be mindful of where the participants are in their journey of faith - some might finish this series ready to enter into a relationship with Jesus.

### Facilitating Discussions and Reflection

- Consider your audience as you prepare your session. Do they know much about God or the Bible? Do they like discussion or written reflection?
- If you have a larger group, divide participants into smaller groups.
- Ask participants to discuss their responses to your Questions of choice.
- “Pair and Share” works great with small groups that aren’t talking much.
- Often during small group discussion, participants will pose additional tough questions. It may work well to offer an anonymous ‘question box’ where everyone’s questions can be collected and discussed later!

### Consider Room Set Up

- As the main element of NUA are the videos, it is important to make the room as suitable for viewing as possible. The darker the room, the better. Using high quality speakers will improve the experience as well.
- If possible, arrange the seating in a way that invites dialogue - avoid rows if you can.

# 1

## CHAPTER ONE

### How Did We Get Here?

#### Overview

Both science and faith seem to suggest that the universe began at a precise moment in time. If this is true, something caused everything to begin—and this powerful creative force must be beyond the universe itself. Contrary to popular belief, having a faith does not mean you have to ignore science. Science helps us understand how and when the universe came to be. Faith is about exploring who created it and why. As far as we know, we are the only creatures on earth asking why we are here. Is our desire for meaning a clue to who we really are? Maybe we are here by chance—or maybe we were created for a purpose.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Consider the cause and effect of our existence—how life began and the possibility that someone started it all.
2. Understand that science and faith do not have to work against each other. Instead, we can begin to recognise how these ideas complement one another.
3. Discuss and work out whether life is random and meaningless, or if we might exist for a larger purpose.



## Engagement Idea

### Post-it Notes

Pass out a Post-it note to each participant. Give them one minute to consider how they would answer the question “How did we get here?”, and have them write their answer (anonymously) on their Post-it note. Have everyone stick their note to a window, whiteboard, or even the floor and read the answers out loud. This gives you and everyone else an idea of people’s initial thoughts on the topic, hopefully broadening horizons and offering food for thought.

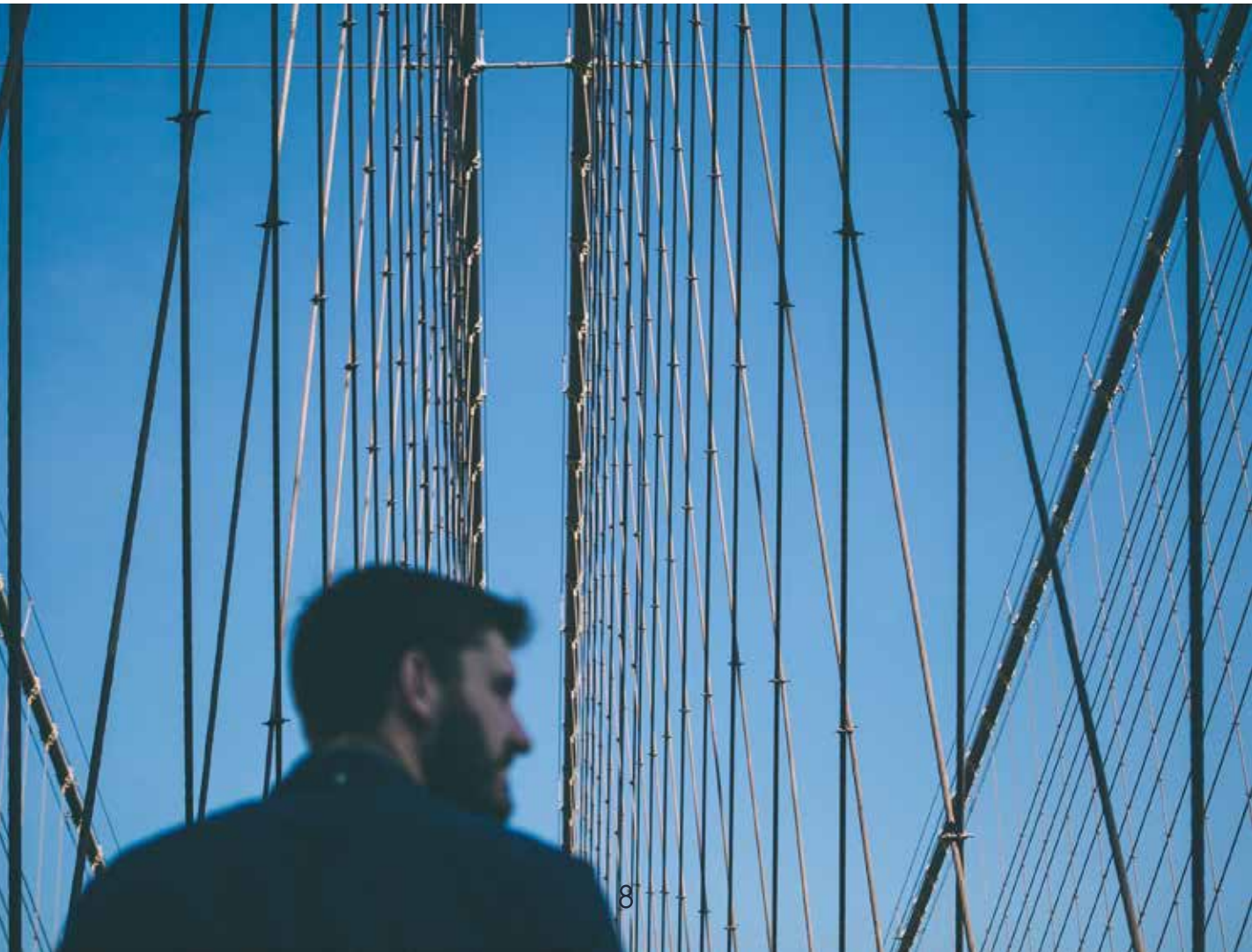


# NUA I.I - Has the Universe Always Existed?

**Summary:** Has the universe always existed, or was there a specific time when all of this started? Both science and faith point to a precise beginning (Genesis 1:1). If so, then it's fair to suggest that something caused things to kick off, and that this powerful creative force must therefore be beyond the universe itself.

## Episode Questions

1. What kinds of conversations have you had about the existence of God?  
How did they go?
2. Do you think we are alone in the universe?
3. How do you think the earth came to be and why?



## NUA I.2 – Is God in the Details?

**Summary:** Having a faith does not mean you have to ignore science. Science may help us understand how and when the universe came to be. Faith is about exploring who created it and why (Romans 1:20). Scientifically speaking, the chances of our universe supporting life are incredibly small. So, either we are the product of chance, or someone wanted us to exist.

### Episode Questions

1. Do you think it's possible to be passionate about science and faith? Why or why not?
2. How do you feel about the miniscule chance our universe had at supporting life? Did we just get lucky?
3. How much evidence would you need to believe that the world has a creator?

## NUA I.3 – What Does This Life Mean?

**Summary:** Is our desire for meaning a clue to who we really are? Maybe love, joy, compassion, and imagination are just chemical reactions—but how extraordinary is it that our whole universe came from nothing, accidentally produced the impossibly perfect conditions for life to exist, and that we would look around and conclude that it all means nothing! On the contrary, we live like it means everything.

### Episode Questions

1. Do you think that your life has a purpose beyond survival and reproduction? Why or why not?
2. Where do you think our desire for meaning and purpose comes from?
3. What was the most interesting part of this video? Why?

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “How did we get here?”

What has changed? What do you think now?

Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask them to write a personal response.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

Pose the big question to three people over the next week: “How did we get here?”

Have participants record the answers.



# 2

## Chapter TWO

### Jesus: Fact or Fiction?

#### Overview

According to the historical criteria for accuracy, we have enormous amounts of evidence for the life and deeds of Jesus. During the first century, oral tradition meant stories were passed on word for word. Even so, how are we expected to believe that Jesus really performed miracles? There seems to be lots of evidence pointing to the accuracy of the Gospels. For one thing, not even the religious leaders of Jesus' time denied his miracles. Also, the Gospel accounts are told by eyewitnesses that, if lying, have done a poor job of making themselves look good or their Messiah victorious—and would so many of the disciples have died defending a story they knew to be a lie? Lastly, why did this obscure Jewish teacher inspire so much historical documentation? He must have done something extraordinary!

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Learn about and understand the criteria for historical accuracy, comparing accounts of other well-known figures to those of Jesus.
2. Consider the possibility that eyewitness accounts during the first century might have been incredibly accurate, even 30 years later—and even when describing miracles.
3. Understand and consider the arguments for and against the idea that the disciples fabricated the Gospels.



## Engagement Idea

### How Much Do You Know About The Bible?

Split into small groups (or new groups for this activity). Ask participants to create a 45-second presentation introducing the Bible to someone who has never heard of it before. You might suggest they include the Bible's content, structure, main themes, breakdown, dates written, audience, and more. This should be an informal activity—humour is encouraged! It might begin to highlight how little most of us actually know about the Bible today.



## NUA 2.1 – Was Jesus the Real Deal?

**Summary:** In order to believe an outrageous story, we need to trust the source. When it comes to the life of Jesus, we have the Gospels—but are they trustworthy? According to the historical criteria for accuracy, we have much more evidence of the life and deeds of Jesus than we do for Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar!

### Episode Questions

1. Do you struggle with believing that the stories of Jesus are true? Why or why not?
2. Jesus was a historical figure whose life we can learn from today. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
3. If you only had 30 seconds to tell someone about Jesus, which parts of the story would you include?

## NUA 2.2 – How Can I trust What the Bible Says?

**Summary:** If most of the accounts of Jesus' life weren't written until 30 years after he died, how can they be accurate? During that time, oral tradition meant memorising stories, word for word. Even so, many people question the accuracy of the Gospels because unbelievable things happened. Interestingly, during Jesus' life, no one denied that he performed miracles—even those who wanted him dead. Why is this obscure Jewish teacher so extensively recorded? He must have done something extraordinary!

### Episode Questions

1. Do you think the Bible is more likely to be historical fact or just fiction?
2. Do you believe the supernatural is possible? Why or why not?
3. If Jesus was not the Son of God, why do you think he is still being talked about today?

## NUA 2.3 – Why Should I Believe the Bible?

**Summary:** Critics often suggest that the Gospel writers exaggerated, but their accounts are unusually specific. Were these details (Mark 4:38, Mark 14:52, John 21:8-11) the result of eyewitness experience, or were they fabricated to make the stories more believable? Did the disciples have motive to lie? They didn't make themselves look great (Luke 9:46) and emphasised Jesus' humanity. If they were lying, wouldn't they have glorified themselves? Would so many of the disciples have died defending a lie?

### Episode Questions

1. What do you think: did the disciples make this whole thing up, or are these stories something we can trust?
2. If the disciples did fabricate the Gospels, what might have been their motive?
3. Have you ever read the Gospels for yourself? Would you consider reading them? Why or why not?



## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement.

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “Who was Jesus?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask the participants to write a personal response..

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

Challenge your participants to do a bit of background research on the Bible, particularly if they found the first activity tricky. Challenge the group to ask some people who might know a thing or two about the Bible, taking notes in their NUA journal. Ask them to record the answers.



# 3

## Chapter THREE

### What About The Resurrection?

#### Overview

Jesus' tomb was found empty three days after his death—so what happened to the body? One of three things is possible: either Jesus faked his death, the body was stolen, OR Jesus actually rose from the dead. Crucifixion was designed to kill slowly—no one survived that kind of torture. So, if he really died, maybe the body was stolen and the disciples lied about the resurrection. Why, then, would they choose women as their key witnesses? (Matthew 28:5-8). In the first century, the word of a woman was not considered legal testimony. As for the Romans and the Jews, they both had strong motives for keeping Jesus in the grave—and yet, neither group produced the body when rumours of resurrection began to circulate. Is it possible Jesus really did come back from the dead? If so, it changes everything (1 Corinthians 15:14).

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Consider the reality of crucifixion.
2. Think about possible explanations for the empty tomb.
3. Reflect on the commitment of the disciples to their belief in the resurrection and what it means for us +2,000 years later.



## Engagement Idea

### **Did man actually land on the moon?**

Many people deny the American moon-landing of 1969. Some suggest it was filmed in a studio. Ask the participants to discuss what kind of proof they need to believe in an event of this scale.

After discussion, introduce the idea that many conspiracy theories have been suggested about the resurrection as well. It is worth considering the facts surrounding Jesus' death and making up our own minds about what happened that weekend in history.

## NUA 3.1 – How Did Jesus Die?

**Summary:** The cross is a symbol of Jesus' crucifixion and his resurrection from the dead. Three days after his death, it was rumoured that Jesus' tomb was empty. So what happened to the body? Either Jesus faked his death, the Romans or disciples stole his body from the tomb, OR Jesus actually rose from the dead. So, could Jesus have survived the crucifixion? The Romans had perfected the cruellest form of public execution in history, which included suffocation and a spear in his side (John 19:34). Surviving this would have been a miracle in and of itself!

### Episode Questions

1. Does the cross mean anything beyond jewellery anymore?
2. Were you aware of how brutal crucifixion was and do you think Jesus could have survived it?
3. Jesus: Con Man or Son of God? What do you think?



## NUA 3.2 – Did Jesus Defeat Death?

**Summary:** After Jesus' death, two of his female followers visited the tomb and found it empty! How did this happen? The Romans placed guards at Jesus' tomb. Both the Romans and the Jews wanted Jesus dead—but neither produced the body when rumours of resurrection began to circulate. Maybe the Gospel writers made it all up? Why, then, would Matthew reference well-known people (who could refute his claims) and choose women as key witnesses? In a patriarchal society, the word of a woman was considered unreliable. A lie requires convincing details.

### Episode Questions

1. Think creatively: Are there other possible explanations for the empty tomb?
2. What are the characteristics of a reliable witness?
3. Are there groups of people in the 21st century who are more likely to be believed than others?

## NUA 3.3 – Do the Facts Stack Up?

**Summary:** Most historians agree that Jesus was crucified, died, and was buried in a tomb near Jerusalem, which was found empty three days later. If the Romans and the Jews are unlikely suspects, we're left with the disciples. Let's consider their opportunity and motives: could a group of fishermen and accountants pull off such a complicated heist? They might have been embarrassed for following a messiah who was killed, but if they stole the body to save face, would they have died for their fake religion years later? The resurrection changes everything.

### Episode Questions

1. Have you ever been afraid to tell the truth about something you witnessed?  
Why?
2. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then Christianity is useless and we are to be pitied above all people. What do you make of this statement?  
*See 1 Corinthians 15:17-19*
3. Considering everything we've looked at so far, what is your view of the resurrection?

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “Do you think Jesus died and rose again?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask them to write a personal response.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

Find 2-3 people of faith and ask them how important the resurrection is to their spiritual journey. If they found out that Jesus didn't actually rise from the dead, would it change anything for them?





# 4

## Chapter FOUR

### What Was Jesus Really Like?

#### Overview

Is Jesus someone we can trust? In the Gospels, we are told many stories of his encounters with lost and hurting people. How did he act? He forgave and protected an adulterous woman, he healed the sick and showed them love, and had grace for unbelievers. Everywhere he went he noticed the outcast, seeing them as people, instead of merely sinners. He was a living example of compassion.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Contemplate Jesus as a human being, with character and personality.
2. Ask the question, "Would I have liked Jesus?"
3. Reflect on the stories of Jesus' encounters with hurting people and what they have to say about who he is.



## Engagement Idea

### **Jesus From The Television**

Using only examples found in modern-day programs and films, ask each participant to describe how Jesus is portrayed. Additionally, ask them to decide whether they like this version of Jesus or not.

## NUA 4.1 – What Was Jesus Really Like?

**Summary:** To this day, Jesus impacts culture in big ways. We can see what other people say about him, but, according to the Gospels, is Jesus someone we can trust? When he encountered a woman who had cheated on her husband, he defied the law and stopped her from being stoned by asking the crowd to consider their own sinfulness first. He doesn't condemn the crowd or the woman, but shows them love and grace instead (John 8:1-11).

### Episode Questions

1. Based on this story, describe Jesus in three words.
2. How is Jesus portrayed in society today?
3. Do you think there is anything Jesus wouldn't forgive?



## NUA 4.2 – Does God Notice Me?

**Summary:** Jesus became very well-known during his ministry. Large crowds would gather wherever he went, competing for his attention. There was one woman, though, who quietly followed him. She had a bleeding disorder that made her a religious and social outcast and was desperate enough for healing to grab Jesus' robe when he was not looking. When he noticed her, he could have been angry that someone who was so unclean had touched him—instead, he asks to hear her story (Mark 5:25-34).

### Episode Questions

1. Do you think Jesus would still draw a crowd today? Why or why not?
2. Do you think God notices people individually?
3. What do you think was more important for the woman, the healing or being noticed by Jesus?

## NUA 4.3 – Is it OK to Doubt?

**Summary:** Doubt is a major part of most people's life journey. Thomas, a disciple, was not present when Jesus first appeared to his followers after his death and resurrection. He later heard the story from his friends, but struggled to believe that Jesus was really alive again. Instead of being angry that Thomas didn't trust him, Jesus appeared to him, showed him his wounds, and gave him the opportunity to believe. Jesus chose compassion over criticism (John 20:24-29).

### Episode Questions

1. Is doubt a good or bad thing? Why?
2. Why doesn't Jesus give Thomas a hard time for doubting?
3. If these were the only three stories that we ever knew about Jesus, how would you sum him up?

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “What do you think Jesus was really like?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask them to write a personal response.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

There have been many inspiring movements under the name of ‘Random Acts of Kindness’. The NUA challenge for this week is to commit an ‘intentional act of kindness’. Maybe someone you know is struggling with isolation that could really do with a friend right now—or maybe there’s someone you need to forgive. Whatever it is, challenge yourself to intentionally reach out to someone this week.

Ask participants to record their experiences.



# 5

## Chapter FIVE

### Why Do I Like Jesus, But Struggle With Christians?

#### Overview

Some people think being 'Christian' means being the 'nice guy'. The problem is, Christianity isn't about looking nice and religious. There are many things about this world that should make us angry, like poverty, injustice, and inequality. Jesus reminds us that following God is not about rules, it's about relationship. When rules get in the way of us knowing and loving God and his creation, we've missed the point. The more we understand God's love for us, the less power fear has in our lives.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Viewers should reflect on their impression of Christians.
2. Understand why these stereotypes are often the result of people's misunderstanding of Jesus' teachings.
3. Consider what a life modeled after Jesus really looks like.



## Engagement Idea

### **Design A Christian**

Ask each small group to “Design a Christian”, including appearance, lifestyle, and character. The presentations should make for some interesting insights into the world’s perceptions of Christians today. If possible, provide paper and encourage creative expression on the portraits.





## NUA 5.1 – What is Authentic Faith?

**Summary:** Some of the stereotypes about what it means to be a Christian are pretty bad. One of the most common is “Mr. Nice Guy”, who, like Ned Flanders from ‘The Simpsons’, is polite on the outside but bottled up with rage underneath. A life of faith is meant to be authentic. It’s not that we should never be angry—on the contrary, there are many things about this world that should make us angry: like poverty, injustice, and inequality. Jesus was angry about these things and he let everyone know about it (Mark 3:5, John 2:13-22). Christianity isn’t about looking nice and religious; it’s diving into the deep end, a life fully immersed in following after Jesus.

### Episode Questions

1. Have you ever heard of Jesus described as being angry before?
2. Can you ever be too nice?
3. How should a Christian be defined?

## NUA 5.2 – Do Christians Just Follow Rules?

**Summary:** Sometimes it seems like Christianity is all about following rules instead of living a full life, as Jesus demonstrated. Our society values rules—rules keep things in order. The problem is when rules become the sole focus of a person’s life. That kind of religion produces hypocritical, judgmental behaviour. Jesus was quick to speak against this type of superiority complex (Luke 18:9-14). He reminds us that following God is not about rules, it’s about relationship. When rules get in the way of us knowing and loving God and his creation, we’ve missed the point. It’s really about living like Jesus and letting his love and humility be an example for the way we should treat others.

### Episode Questions

1. What rules do you associate with Christianity? Do they make sense to you?
2. Can you identify other problems with rule-based religion?
3. In your opinion what is the difference between a life spent keeping religious rules and a life spent pursuing a relationship with Jesus?

## NUA 5.3 – Are Christians Out of Touch?

**Summary:** Fear can easily get in the way of living a full life. Sometimes Christians misinterpret Jesus’ command of being in the world, but not of the world, and hide themselves away from the world around them. Living like this keeps people out of our lives, robbing us of our ability to love others well and make a difference. John wrote that “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18), which doesn’t mean we are immune to fear, but that the more we understand God’s love for us, the less power fear has in our lives. Like the Good Samaritan, our lives are to be ruled by love, not fear (Luke 10:25-37).

### Episode Questions

1. In what ways do you think fear impacts our lives?
2. Can you think of a time when someone was a “Good Samaritan” to you?
3. What would living like Jesus look like for you? What challenges would you face if you were to begin living a life like Jesus?

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “What should a Christian life look like?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask them to write a personal response in their journal.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

Conduct a brief survey. Ask five friends, family members, or random people to answer the question, “What are Christians known for?” Record their responses along with a brief reflection on why you think the responses were mostly positive or negative.



# 6

## Chapter SIX

### How Can You Say That God Is Good?

#### Overview

Lots of people wonder how God could allow so much evil in the world. You see, humans have been given the ability to love—and love is what makes suffering possible. Choosing to love makes life meaningful, but as a result, we also have to deal with the consequences of people choosing not to love. The story of Jesus is one of a God who came into the world and experienced our pain. The Bible tells us that he wept, but instead of looking for someone to blame, Jesus asked what God could do. Christianity doesn't try to explain suffering, but Jesus invites us to respond to it. Following Jesus doesn't mean that we will never suffer, but the Bible does promise that suffering will end someday (Revelation 21:4). Until then, we can find opportunities to serve those in need.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Consider free will and what love would look like if we had no choice.
2. Reflect on the implications of Jesus experiencing and understanding our pain.
3. Contemplate God's promise that all things will one day be made new.



## Engagement Idea

### Good News

In less than two minutes (with the use of the internet or local newspapers), ask the small groups to compete to find the best “good news” story of the day. Have each group share their findings—this might highlight how hard it can be to find “good news” amongst so much tragedy.

## NUA 6.1 – Where Was God?

**Summary:** One of the most common questions about the existence of God asks how an all-loving creator could allow so much evil in the world. Pain and suffering are disruptive because we have a shared view that life is valuable. We've been given the ability to love—and this is also what makes suffering possible. Loving is a choice, as is unloving, destructive behaviour. The choice makes love meaningful, but as a result, we also have to deal with the consequences of bad human choice. Suffering that isn't a result of human behaviour (like natural disasters and sickness) is harder to understand, but the story of Jesus is one of a God who came into the world and experienced our pain (Hebrews 4:15, Isaiah 53:4).

### Episode Questions

1. Based on your own experience, what do you think causes suffering in the world?
2. Some have said that if God were all loving and powerful, there wouldn't be pain or suffering in the world. Do you think that's true? Why or why not?
3. Is there a reason for suffering?



## NUA 6.2 – Why Did it Happen to Me?

**Summary:** David is a man from Northern Ireland who was injured in a bombing and later lost his wife and child in a car accident (full story in the video). People often respond to hard situations in the worst way by assuring us that “everything is going to be okay.” When Jesus’ friend Lazarus died, he weeps with the family and then raised Lazarus from the dead! He knew that, in the end, restoration was possible, but in the middle of his friends’ grief, he shares their pain (John 11:1-44).

### Episode Questions

1. How do you respond when you hear a story like David’s?
2. Do you find yourself accusing God for all of the suffering in the world?
3. Have you ever considered the idea that God might also grieve? Does this idea make God more approachable to you?

## NUA 6.3 – Will it All Be Worth it?

**Summary:** Often we can’t understand why pain exists, but we can see how hardships shape us and teach us along the way (Romans 5:4). Even though following Jesus doesn’t mean that we will never suffer, it does promise an eventual end to evil and pain. Until then, we may not have answers to all of our questions, but we can find opportunities to serve those in need, mourn with the broken, and pass on the hope that one day God will make all things new (Revelation 21:4).

### Episode Questions

1. What would you class as suffering?
2. Why do you think that some of those who have suffered then go on to bring positive change in the world?
3. Name some people whose responses to their own suffering have inspired you.



## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the big questions again: “How can a good God allow so much pain?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in option 1, ask them to write a personal response.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

A tough challenge this week, but one that could make a huge difference: If you know someone who is currently suffering, how can you offer your help or give your time? Maybe you can go on a hospital visit, home visit, or make a phone call. Record your thoughts and choices.



# 7

## Chapter SEVEN

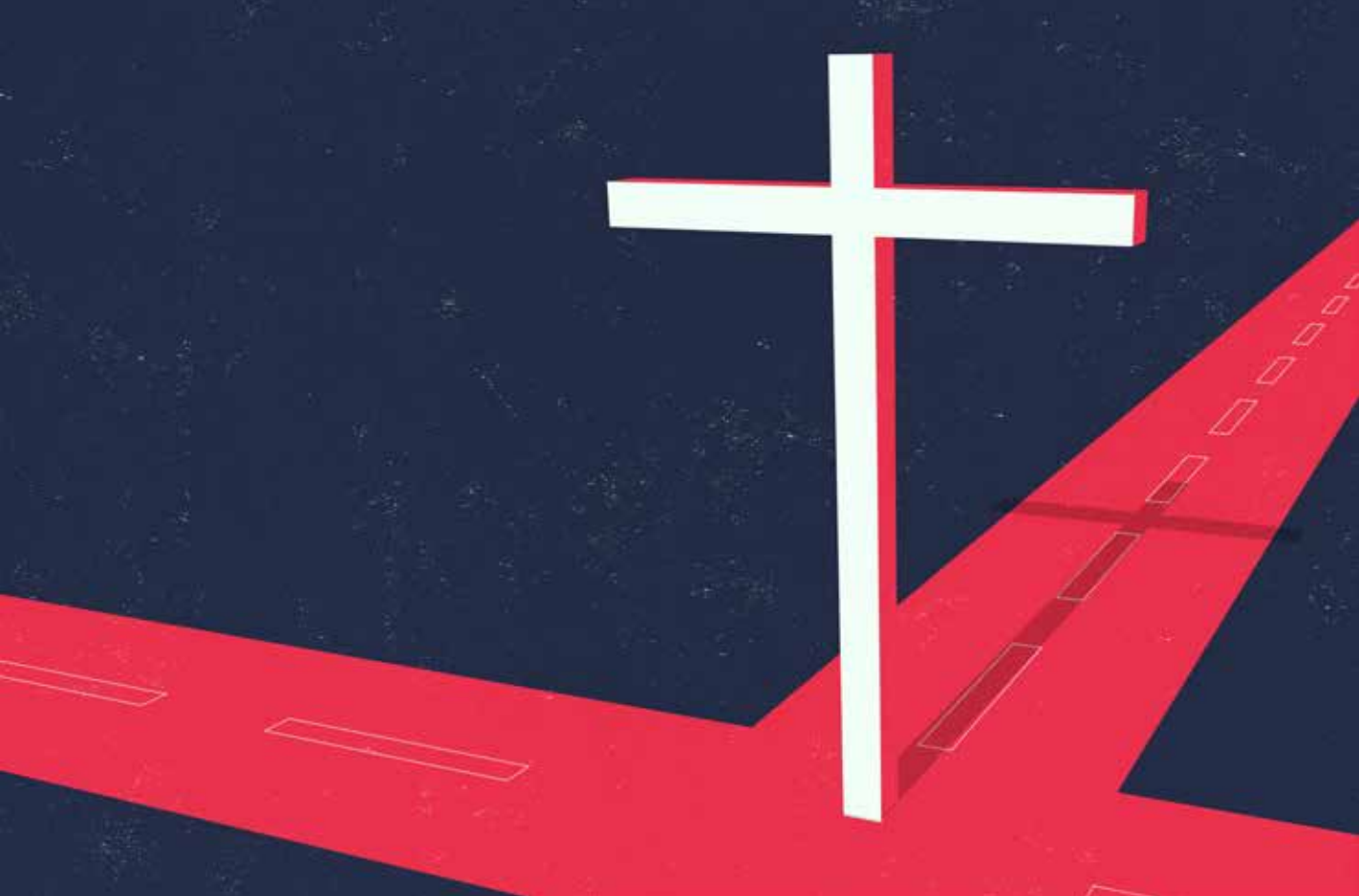
### Has The Church Caused More Harm Than Good?

#### Overview

Our identities are complex and it feels unfair when we are stereotyped. People often blame religion for the world's violence. It's true that throughout history, people have done some horrific things in the name of Jesus, but it's important to remember that, in these instances, it was people who let us down, not Jesus. The Church often looks broken because it is—it's full of people who are a work in progress. At the same time, the words of Jesus (John 13:35) have inspired some hugely influential movements of justice, compassion, and love over the last +2,000 years.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Students should consider the idea that the Church isn't made up of people who already have it all figured out.
2. Understand that the Church's failings aren't Jesus' failings.
3. Take a look at the positive influence that Christians have had in the world.



## Engagement Idea

### **Design A Church**

In small groups discuss how they would redesign church to look/be. From the design of a meeting place, type of gatherings, activities, mission statement and reason for existence, allow them to share their thoughts as they present to everyone.



## NUA 7.1 – Why Are Churches so Messed Up?

**Summary:** Our identities are often more complex than people give us credit for. Being Irish means people see us as friendly and hospitable, but we also have a reputation for drinking too much. It's embarrassing when people unfairly generalise—and it's the same with being a Christian. Throughout history, people have done some horrific things in the name of Jesus. The Church was meant to be a hospital for the sick, not a museum for saints. Jesus said he came not for those who think they're righteous, but those who know they need saving (Luke 5:32). The Church often looks broken because it is—it's full of people who are a work in progress as they develop spiritually, emotionally, and morally.

### Episode Questions

1. Are you proud or embarrassed of your nationality?
2. Before today, how would you have described the Church?
3. What do you think the world would have been like without the Church?

## NUA 7.2 – Am I better Off Without Church?

**Summary:** People often blame religion for the world’s violence. Although it’s true that misplaced convictions have caused horrible bloodshed, even societies where religion is absent have produced violence and death. Gandhi wondered how Jesus’ teachings of peace and loving your enemies could justify oppression and war. The Bible has even been used in the past to justify slavery and abuse! It’s important to remember that, in these instances, it was people who let us down, not Jesus—it’s Jesus who defines Christianity and shows us what God is truly like.

### Episode Questions

1. Why do you think the 20th Century was the bloodiest yet?
2. “I love your Christ, but not your Christians—your Christians are so unlike your Christ”. What do you think of Gandhi’s words?
3. How do you think Christians should best respond to extremism or acts of terror?

## NUA 7.3 – Can I belong in Church?

**Summary:** The Church has been responsible for some terrible atrocities, but the words of Jesus have also been the catalyst for some of the most influential movements of justice, compassion, and love. Christians worked to end slavery and have established hospitals, schools, and homeless shelters around the world. Closer to home, organisations like the Leprosy Mission were started by people motivated by their love for Christ and his example of caring for the sick, poor, and needy among us.

### Episode Questions

1. Did you know, that despite its mistakes, the Church has been involved in positive changes in the world?
2. What do you think the future of the Church looks like?
3. How can you help bring new life into your local church?

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** Ask one of the questions again: “Has the Church caused more harm than good?” What has changed? What do you think now? Do you have more questions?

**Option 2:** Based on the questions in Option 1, ask them to write a personal response.

**Option 3:** Dive into more group discussion.

## NUA Challenge

If you are part of a local church and desire to see change, why don't you ask the leaders how you can participate. Be the change that you want to see.





# 8

## Chapter EIGHT

### What's Jesus Got To Do With Me?

#### Overview

Genesis 1 is a confusing story. Should it be taken literally? Or is it poetry? Either way, we can learn from Adam and Eve today: their shame and brokenness is something we can all relate to. We are made in God's image and God is all about relationship. Jesus coming to earth as a baby was God reaching out to us—he could have shown up any way he wanted, but he chose to live a life of hardship as he built relationships and loved the outcast. While other religious ideas seem to focus on how to keep God happy, the story of Jesus is about the lengths that God will go to get to us. Jesus conquered death to bring freedom from sin and suffering. The world tells us we need to change in order to be good enough. Jesus came to forgive us and set us free.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. Consider the way our lives are reflected in the stories of the Bible.
2. Recognise that Jesus came and experienced hardship and death in order to understand and be in relationship with us.
3. Reflect on the ways that Jesus' life and death impact our lives today.



## Engagement Idea

### **A Day With Jesus**

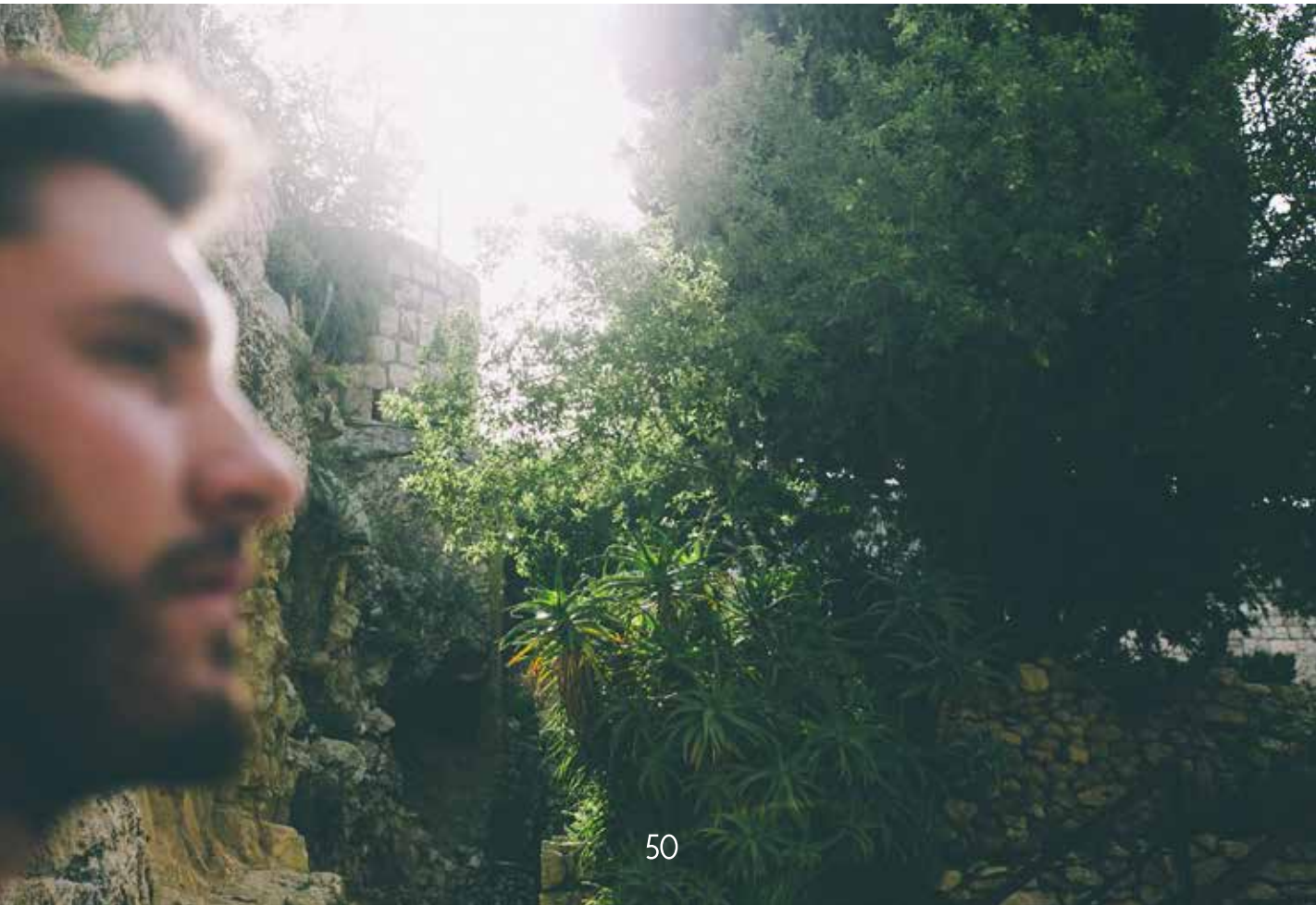
Assuming that the Bible is accurate, imagine that Jesus wants to spend a day with your NUA group. What would you do? Where would you go? What type of questions would you ask him? Hopefully this will ignite underlying questions about Jesus.

## NUA 8.1 – Can Jesus Affect my Life?

**Summary:** Genesis 1 is may be a confusing story to read. This passage says that God created the world in six days and that a tree held the knowledge of good and evil—there is even a talking snake! People often disagree about how this story should be interpreted—is it to be taken literally? Or not? Either way, we can learn from the story today: Adam and Eve felt shame and experienced brokenness, which is something we can all relate to. We are made in the image of a relational God. We were made to be known and yet we struggle to feel accepted which is also something we can all relate to.

### Episode Questions

1. Do you think there is a disconnect between us and God?
2. Why, at times, does it seem so hard to do the right thing?
3. Why do you think we struggle to accept love?



## NUA 8.2 – How Much Am I worth?

**Summary:** Jesus entering human history is God becoming flesh and dwelling among us (John 1:14). He did not enter the world displaying great strength and power, but rather as a poor little baby. He could have shown up and rescued us and left again, but instead he chose to live a human life for 33 years—a life of hardship, building relationships, and showing love to the outcast. Not only did he come and experience life in our shoes, he then went on to willingly die for us (Luke 22:42). While other religious ideas seem to focus on how to keep God happy, the story of Jesus is about the lengths that God will go to in order to have a relationship with us.

### Episode Questions

1. What do you think Jesus did between the ages of 12 and 30? What experiences would you like to imagine that he had?
2. What is Jesus to you? A good teacher? A friend? A saviour?
3. Does the idea of Jesus dying for you change how you will live?

## NUA 8.3 – What will you choose?

**Summary:** People often say that Jesus died for our sins. Jesus talked about the effects of sin and how our actions can separate us from God and the ones we love, negatively impacting our identities and worth. Jesus conquered death to bring freedom from these things (John 8:32). The world tells us we need to change in order to be good enough. Jesus also experienced this. His followers expected him to be an earthly king who would conquer Rome and free Israel from oppression—they wanted a kingdom built on bloodshed, but Jesus came to build a kingdom through sacrifice and love. He came to forgive us and set us free.

### NUA Evaluation

You may want to jump straight to the reflection part, but if time allows, you could give the groups a chance to chat about what they liked and disliked about the NUA Film Series.

## Reflection

### Checking the level of engagement

**Option 1:** As a final personal reflection, ask participants to give a written response to the question, “What has Jesus got to do with me?” This is a good opportunity to reflect on how the series has impacted their thoughts and faith journey.

**Option 2:** Consider inviting participants to make a choice of faith in Jesus Christ today.

## NUA Challenge

If NUA has benefitted you, we challenge you to pass it on—allow others to ask some of these big questions about faith. NUA is so easy to run! Make some food, invite your friends over, press play, and enjoy some honest chats.



# 9

## Chapter NINE

### Are You Ready To Take The Next Step?

#### Overview

Making a decision to follow and trust Jesus with your life is a big call, not one to be taken lightly. As we have journeyed through each NUA Film I think we have discovered just how trustworthy Jesus is.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. To offer the participant an opportunity to make a faith commitment.



## Episode Questions:

1. Have you come to understand how trustworthy Jesus is?
2. Are you ready to enter into a relationship with God despite what might be trying to hold you back?
3. Are you ready to take the next step in a heartfelt response to what Jesus has done for you?



# 10

## Chapter TEN

### How Can I Tell Others?

#### Overview

Departing words from someone we love have a deep impact on us. After everything Jesus had said to his disciples, he left them with some very strong departing words.

#### Aims and Objectives

1. To investigate Jesus' final words: The Great Commission.
2. To explore what it would look like to share our faith with a friend.



## Episode Questions:

1. What would it look like to respond to Jesus's invitation to a changed life?
2. Have you ever thought about how your life can inspire others to know Jesus?
3. Have you ever considered how someone can trust Jesus because they trust you?
4. What does it mean to share the hope of God's message and allowing him to do the rest?
5. What one friend can you think of to invite on a faith journey?



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