



On your marks

Jesus met people from all walks of life as he went around Israel/Palestine speaking about the kingdom of heaven. Many of these people have in fact become famous themselves, way beyond what they could have ever imagined.

The following resource links some of these people to the alphabet, providing 26 different names or types of people as focuses that will last you throughout a month - if you take a break on Sundays! Alongside each one is a simple thought to get you talking with your children about each encounter with Jesus. If you print this off it could be something to provide a focus for prayer together, perhaps around a meal or at bedtime.

Get set

You will need a Bible if you wish to look up the verse in its context and explore the story more fully.

Go!

A

Andrew - John 1:40

He was a follower of John the Baptist before he became a disciple of Jesus. Andrew is someone with his eyes open, looking out for God and wanting to know more. What new things will God lead you into as a family today? And how can you keep alert to what God wants you to discover next?

B

Bartholomew - John 1:47

Nathaniel's family name was Bartholomew. Jesus surprised him by knowing the sort of person he was and even what he was up to, before Philip brought him to Jesus. God has a special part for everyone to play in his family. What has he got for your family to do today?

C

Children - Matthew 13:13-14

Jesus loved children. He wanted them near, even though his disciples tried to keep away. Jesus wants all of us to start seeing life afresh, as if through a newborn baby's eyes! How can you help each other do this today?

D

a Deaf and mute man - Mark 7:32

Each healing story has its own particular shape and pattern. Jesus deals with everyone as unique and special individuals. Do we sometimes stereotype people and think that one size or one approach fits all?

E



Elijah- Luke 9:30-31

This strange encounter leaves the three disciples almost speechless. Jesus is flooded with light and is seen talking with people from the past! But they never forgot what happened. Just think, when you talk to Jesus today you're stepping into heaven and even outside time.

F

Followers of John - Luke 7:20

John arranged for some of his followers to meet up with Jesus. It seems that even he had his doubts about Jesus. It's OK to ask questions and even be a little sceptical. God wants us to face unspoken questions and not to pretend they don't exist.

G

Greeks - John 12:20-22

It seems that even some foreign tourists got interested in Jesus. He's not just for those on the inside. Do you genuinely welcome and encourage those outside the church to ask about Jesus or are you too busy keeping him to yourselves?

H

Herod - Luke 23:8

This Herod's father had once tried to kill Jesus. Now that first Herod's younger son just wants to see a miracle done. Is there a danger that we too might be more interested in seeing the supernatural happen rather than really being interested in what Jesus says and who he is?

I

Invalids - Matthew 21:14

What a contrast! There is such chaos in the temple among the stallholders, but such happiness among the blind and lame, who Jesus heals. It seems that it's more important to God to be doing good to others than getting the service all organised and beautiful. What do you think?

J

Jairus - Luke 8:41-42

His daughter's illness brought Jairus to his knees and to Jesus. Often it is through painful experiences that God can come close to people where no amount of argument and fine words will work. As a ruler of the synagogue Jairus would have had plenty experience of the latter.

K

Kings - Matthew 2:10-11

Traditionally, the Magi were kings from far-off lands. This story reminds us that Jesus' birth was for the whole world and that Jesus is the true king. I wonder what Jesus' family did with those three special gifts.

L

Lawyer - Luke 10:25

We owe this lawyer a lot - his questions draw out one of the most famous of Jesus' stories, the Good



Samaritan. I wonder how you would answer his urgent questions, namely, 'How do I get to heaven?' and 'Who is my neighbour?'

M
Martha - Luke 10:40-41
Martha often gets a bad press but she was only trying to be a good hostess. We are all different sorts of people and each can welcome Jesus in our own special way. Do you feel sympathy for Martha? What do you think about Mary?

N
Nicodemus - John 3:1-2; John 19:39-40
Nicodemus' personal story of faith seems to 'book-end' John's Gospel. He is honest enough to ask questions of Jesus and by the end of the story, it seems, he has found some answers. Are Christians perhaps too quick to rush people into believing?

O
Outsiders - Matthew 8:5 and 10
No true Jew would ever think of entering a non-Jewish home but Jesus was ready to be different. He is amazed by the faith of this Roman officer. Sometimes the faith shown by unexpected and even non-believing people puts to shame our own trust in God. Are you ready to be surprised and learn like this from others?

P
Paralysed man - Mark 2:3
His four friends thought that he only needed physical healing but Jesus knew better. There were deeper issues that needed to be sorted out first and only God could deal with the immense guilt he felt inside. Do you think forgiveness is more important than physical health?

Q
(trick) Questioners - Mark 12:13
These questioners tried to trap Jesus by asking about the payment of taxes. Why is it such a clever answer? Jesus looked behind the questions to what people were really saying. How can you learn to do this too?

R
Rabbis - Luke 2:46-47
Jesus as a young boy was keen to learn more, although he already knew so much. I wonder what these teachers thought about the young Jesus. Maybe some of them later heard him preach or even saw him die. Do you think that the church pays enough attention to the questions and ideas of young people?

S
Simon - Matthew 16:16
Jesus had given Simon a nickname. He was Peter the rock. Sometimes that rock was a real support



and sometimes it was very wobbly! God knows the best you can be and wants to help you to become that.

T

Tomb man - Luke 8:26-27

No one was beyond the love of God in Jesus, even this madman who lived in a graveyard. Look at the end of the story to see the difference Jesus makes. Do you believe Jesus can change people like this today?

U

Unclean lepers - Luke 17:12

As outsiders with a contagious disease this group of lepers stuck together because no one else would come near them... except Jesus. Only one came back and learned about faith. Do church people sometimes give the impression to the world that being a Christian is more about miracles than knowing Jesus as a friend?

V

VIPs - John 18:13-14; John 18:33-34

Annas, his son Caiaphas and the Roman governor Pilate were the VIPs of their day in church and state but really it was Jesus who was the only true VIP in this chapter. Who do you think Jesus would say are today's VIPs?

W

Widow - Luke 21:1-3

Jesus notices things! Big money attracts most people's attention but it is a little gift that counts most in God's sight. What is your family's attitude to money and to what matters most in life?

X

an X-tax collector - Mark 2:13-14

Levi - also known as Matthew - left a well-paid job to follow Jesus. What do you think his friends thought about that? What do you think Jesus said to them all at the party? Do you think any other tax collectors there were convinced about becoming disciples too?

Y

Young ruler - Matthew 19:22

Matthew says he was young and Luke says he was a ruler. All gospels agree that this young man was rich. How is it that being rich might get in the way of following Jesus?

Z

Zacchaeus' family - Luke 19:9

How did the family react, do you think, when Zacchaeus brought Jesus home as a teatime guest? Can you imagine the conversation at the meal? And what they thought afterwards when Zacchaeus began giving money away? It seems that the whole of the family is affected by Jesus. How does knowing Jesus make a difference to the way you behave as a family?