



On your marks

Everyone knows that when you have to work something out for yourself and make your own discoveries, then these are the things that you really remember right on through life! Surely this is what was behind the way Jesus taught, supremely shown through his stories and parables, which got people thinking. These teachings were often puzzling, causing the audience to think twice in order to get under the skin of what Jesus' was saying to them. In the same way Jesus often answered questions with more questions and even seems to have enjoyed speaking in riddles which contained paradoxes. For example:

'The people of this world won't be able to see me, but you will see me' (John 14:19, CEV).

'I am going to do what is best for you. That is why I am going away' (John 16:7).

'For a little while you won't see me, but after a while you will see me' (John 16:16).

'If you love your life, you will lose it' (John 12:25).

'No one who drinks the water I give will ever be thirsty again' (John 4:14).

'Everyone who is now first will be last, and everyone who is last will be first' (Matthew 20:16).

'You must be born from above' (John 3:7).

Inspired by this teaching style, the following idea contains a number of Bible riddles which have to be puzzled out in order to discover the Bible story or person or object they are referring to. Perhaps the most famous riddle of the Bible is the one that Samson poses to his Philistine enemies and which still appears on the front of a Tate and Lyle syrup tin. Go on, look it up! (Judges 14).

Get set

There are a number of ways in which you could use these riddles. Perhaps they could be a way to introduce a topic for a session with your children's group; they might be a fun way into a talk in church; why not use them with the family this summer - there are enough in the three related Bible Riddle ideas (just search for riddles) to last at least a month, at one a day; or perhaps you'd like to use them in your parish magazine or another publication linked to a special summer event. It might even inspire you or the children you work with to write some of your own.

Go!

To introduce the idea of a riddle, use this first one as an example. It is one which BRF staff have used from time to time in schools and with children at special events.



I am old but also new
I may seem rather strange but all of me is true
I am 66 inside but really only 1
I can be pocket-sized or sometimes weigh a ton!
All of me is about a person you really ought to meet
He often signs his name and each story is his treat
I am a world bestseller but sadly seldom read
Perhaps you've seen me on a shelf or lying by a bed?

What am I?

Answer: the Bible. Go through each line and show how each part of the riddle does relate to the Bible, even though the words seem to be contradictory and paradoxical at times. This will give the idea of what a riddle is.

Here are whole lot more. Have fun! The solutions to this set of riddles and also [More Riddles](#) and [Even More Riddles](#) are available on our website - [view the solutions](#).

1

I was high in the sky but also firmly on the earth
I brought co-operation for many but confusion for all
I was unmissable by the crowd yet overlooked by the One
I was the world's first true skyscraper and also its last
I am in the Bible - what am I?

2

I can be carried but not touched
I have two on the outside and ten on the inside
Everyone wants to catch a sight of me
But I'm kept out of sight
I was lost and found; then found but now I am lost
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

3

I was a gift to the one but poison to the others
I was a favoured sign but also a hated symbol
Some say that of many, I was not short
While others talk of two that were far too long
I was stolen and then torn
And became something to mourn
I am in the Bible - what am I?

4

I am thick but hollow; both on and above the ground
I am not only square but am also round



I keep people in and I keep people out
I could not be moved but once fell at a shout
I am in the Bible - what am I?

5

I am one of five, chosen by one of eight
I am mighty small, but by me the Mighty fall
Drawn up from the depths, I am aimed at the heights
I was found where I had sunk and I sank where I was flung
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

6

I was appointed but wasn't expected
I swallowed whole what I did not eat
I was a place of prayer out of sight
And when I was sick, God approved!
I am in the Bible - what am I?

7

Head in the clouds but my feet on the earth
Glowing with fire, people kept a wide berth
Place full of stones, a bush and a rock
(Somewhere to hide, away from the shock)
I must not be touched and of heaven am token
I thundered loud when the tablets were broken
I am in the Bible - what am I?

8

I had many locks that don't need a key
I was far too many for you to count me
I was never to be shortened, for a vow had been said
I was a symbol of strength that flowed from the head
But in a moment of weakness, my secret was out
I lay all in pieces when she gave the shout
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

9

Were we 3 or were we 1,
Appearing beneath the desert sun?
Bringing news that seemed plain daft
So much so that someone laughed
And more solemnly, just as 1,
We spoke of a city and what's to be done
We are in the Bible - who are we?



10

I kept him steady and others away
I kept them safe and showed the way
Once thrown down upon the ground
I came alive with a hissing sound
I hit the rock as he was told
And that was when the water flowed
I am in the Bible - what am I?