



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 (see **The Bible** section of the ideas) 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 the *Barnabas* Team has 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 best seller 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 [Riddles](#) and [More Riddles](#) are available on our website - [view the solutions](#).

1.

A dangerous place but not for the three
Who bravely defied the king's decree
But later that king, he bowed the knee
When there he saw four, not just the three
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

2.

I can sing and I can fight
I can rule and I take flight
I compose and I play
I've looked after animals in my day
I can hide and I can run
And I'm the very youngest son
I had to wait my time
But I finally won
I am in the Bible - who am I?

3.

I am oil and I am flame
I am breath and am not tame
Living water and mighty wind
I am comfort and I am friend



I am one and I am three
Partly and wholly Deity
I am in the Bible - who am I?

4.

I am the youngest of the smallest among the least
I chose just some from the many
I defeated the majority with the few
I'm in the Bible - who am I?

5.

I am a voice not valued
I am a herald not heard
I am a lamp but not the light
I come after the one I come before
I am the last and the least
I am the best man and not the bridegroom
I'm in the Bible - who am I?

6.

Friends of the King
Stones from the river
Baskets at the picnic
Gates of the city
Sons of Jacob
Springs in the desert
I'm in the Bible - how many am I?

7.

Lampstands and stars
Days of creation and years in a dream
Sons of Job and letters to churches
Deacons and candlesticks
Angels and spirits of God
I'm in the Bible - how many am I?

8.

We were two but then five came along
We were all divided and multiplied
We were taken away and nevertheless twelve were left over



We're in the Bible - what are we?

9

I'm a restless evil and full of poison
A match in a forest
The rudder on a ship
An untrustworthy fountain
A horse's bit
As a fig tree I can produce olives
As an olive tree, figs!
I can ruin everything
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

10.

I became a friend to a foe
And a brother to an enemy
I laid hands on the one
Who wanted to lay hands on me
I found the Straight Way
Where I was told what to say
I gave back sight
To the one who'd seen the light
I am in the Bible - who am I?

11

I am sweeter than honey
I am more precious than gold
I am a lamp for the feet
And a hammer to hold
I am a sword for the fight
I am bread to eat
I am a mirror to reveal
I am an eternal light
I am in the Bible - what am I?

12.

I am a door that has no handle
I am a tree you cannot grow
I am bread you do not eat
I am a journey you must go



I am first and I am last
I am the beginning and the end
I am dead and I am alive
I am judge and I am friend
I am in the Bible - who am I?