



## 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 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 [Even More Riddles](#) are available on our website - [view the solutions](#).

**1.**

I am three storeys high but have only one door  
I was built for 8 but carried a lot more  
I started life in an unexpected place  
Until the water filled my space  
Full of life within but none without  
I was one of a kind without a doubt  
I'm in the Bible - what am I?

**2.**

I'm used at mealtimes but am not on a table  
I feed the feeders with a diet that's stable  
I am also a bed and a surprising throne  
I star in the pictures but am never alone  
I am in the Bible - what am I?

**3.**

I am often out at night but rested by day  
I have many uses - work, rest and play  
I move quietly, though sometimes roll  
I was used as a stage but that's not my true role  
I was also a bed for a special guest  
But you should have heard the noise that disturbed his rest



I'm in the Bible - what am I?

**4**

I was once a friend but now a stranger  
Part of a family which I put in danger  
I am loved but not wanted; an outsider within  
Alive but dead because of my skin  
I remain unclean, even though I wash  
I long for the healing of human touch  
I am in the Bible - who am I?

**5.**

I start my life, out of sight  
Hidden in dark, I move towards light  
I am as much below as I am above  
To reach my best, I need lots of love  
I was so tiny but now reach high  
A place for birds up in the sky  
I am in the Bible - what am I?

**6.**

Sent out to fly over a brand-new sea  
That was the first time you read about me  
Later I came to a prophet in need  
Bringing the supper on which he could feed  
Jesus spoke of me as I flew through the air  
I was an example of God's loving care  
I am in the Bible - what am I?

**7.**

A signpost and tree could both describe me  
And a curse and a scandal, none wanted to see  
A throne, an altar and a stumbling block  
A banner, a choice, an anchor and rock  
I am in the Bible - what am I?

**8.**

I am an irritation that becomes a great treasure  
I am collected and polished to give people pleasure  
I was one among many but different from most



For the merchant who bought me at such a great cost  
I'm in the Bible -what am I?

**9.**

I was third in line and I know why  
Everyone thought that I would pass by  
Different, distinct, dangerous and dirt  
Why should I stop to help one hurt?  
I'm the surprising neighbour who taught the crowd  
That none is an enemy where love is allowed  
I'm in the Bible - who am I?

**10.**

I was a place to break a journey  
Somewhere to lay a head  
A place to start climbing  
From a strange sort of bed  
A place to make a promise  
I was lying around  
But I became forever  
A sign of holy ground  
I'm in the Bible - what am I?