

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

After you've completed the five readings in this section, get together with another person or group to talk about the things you've learned. Begin by sharing the insights you gained from your own reflection on the passages. Then use the following questions to help you continue the conversation.

- 1 Have you ever known, or known of, someone who has completely turned their back on Jesus? What caused them to do this?
- 2 Is anyone so evil that they lose the opportunity to repent? Do you think Judas had a chance to change his mind?
- 3 Have you ever hidden your true beliefs about Jesus? Why and how?
- 4 Have you ever been bold about your faith at a time when you felt pressure to hide it? What happened and how did you feel afterwards?
- 5 Do you think politicians should talk about their religious beliefs? And govern based on their religious beliefs? Why/ why not?
- 6 What are the best examples today of how religion and politics should mix? And bad examples?
- 7 Imagine a person who's never heard of Jesus. How would you explain the crucifixion in a way that person would understand?

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## THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Even people who don't consider themselves churchgoers will often attend services at Christmas and Easter. As a result, just about everyone knows at least two stories about Jesus: his birth and his resurrection.

What we'll do in our next five readings is cover all the major passages in the Bible about the resurrection. First we'll look at the four Gospel accounts and you'll find it fascinating to go through them back to back, spotting the similarities in them. Each Gospel writer, though, captured different details and nuances of what happened. Matthew told his story by intertwining experiences of four separate people. Mark emphasises the power that was unleashed by the resurrection. Luke adds an extended account of an encounter that two disciples had with the resurrected Jesus. And John highlights the restoration of the relationship between Peter and Jesus. It's sort of like having four newspaper reporters covering the same event. When we put all the accounts together, we get a pretty complete picture of what happened.

In our fifth reading, we'll look at what the early Church leader Paul taught about the resurrection many years after it happened. By then, the first-century Christians were beginning to have doubts about whether the resurrection of Jesus even happened or not, or whether it was all that important after all. So Paul wrote to reassure the doubters and to firmly re-establish the importance of the resurrection.

As you go through this section, think about what parts of the account stand out to you? Which facts seem most convincing to you? And how could you explain your view of the resurrection to someone who wasn't sure about it?

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