

An Alphabet Gospel (2) - Places Jesus went

On your marks:

Jesus was often travelling around Palestine/Israel, visiting many towns and villages as well as the capital Jerusalem. Many of his famous sayings and miracles are associated with a particular place.

The following resource links some of these places to the alphabet, providing 26 different locations as focuses that will last you throughout the month – if you take a break on Sundays! Alongside each one is a simple thought to get you talking with your children about what Jesus said or did there. If you print this off it could be something to provide a focus for prayer together, perhaps around a meal or at bedtime. You might like to use it alongside a map from Jesus' day, marking on it the places that you read and think about.

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.

Aenon John 3:23

This is where John performed many of his baptisms and possibly where Jesus himself was baptized. Towards the end of his ministry Jesus visited the spot again (John 10:40). Are there special places you have where you feel God has spoken to you?

B.

Bethany John 11:1 and 18

Mary and Martha's home was a safe place for Jesus. He was always welcome here to take time out, particularly in Holy Week with all that was going on in Jerusalem. Where can you go to be quiet and close to God? How could your home provide this sort of gift for other people?

C.

Capernaum Mark 1:21 and 29; Mark 2:1

This is where Jesus centred his ministry when he was in Galilee. Peter and Andrew lived here and there are many stories linked to this lakeside town. They could never predict what would happen when Jesus turned up in their home! What difference does it make

that Jesus is welcome in your home?

D.

Desert Luke 4:1-2

Also known as the wilderness and probably the uninhabited area to the east of the River Jordan. It isn't a safe or comfortable place but nevertheless somewhere with space and no distractions. It was here that Jesus went to pray and think through things. Where can you go to find that sort of undisturbed time for prayer?

E.

Emmaus Luke 24: 13

It was on a walk to this village outside Jerusalem that two disciples were joined by the risen Lord Jesus. They didn't recognize him at first. God often comes close to us through the words or the company of unexpected visitors or travelling companions. What people in your lives have helped you know that Jesus is alive and close?

F.

Far side of the Lake Mark 4:35

Jesus went with his disciples by boat to the far side of Galilee on more than one occasion. It seems he wanted time to rest but often ran into more work to do for God. Imagine what the disciples talked about while he slept in the boat on the way there. Jesus had to cope with the challenge of sometimes being too busy, just like many of us.

G.

Gethsemane John 18:1; Matthew 26:36; Mark 14:32

This was another of Jesus' favourite places when he was in Jerusalem. Is there a special park you like to visit? Do you think it helps prayer if you are in the open air and near to nature? It seems that the shade of these ancient olive trees helped Jesus feel extra close to God at a particularly difficult time.

H.

Mt. Hermon Matthew 16:13

The Roman settlement of Caesarea Philippi was near to Mount Hermon. It was here that Jesus asked his followers who people thought he was. There are many views about who Jesus is today too. What would your answer be to this question?

I.

Israel John 15:1

The vine was a recognised symbol of Israel. Jesus probably spoke these words as he standing near the great Golden Vine that trailed over the Temple Porch in Jerusalem. He is saying that he is the true vine, which Israel is called to become. God brings us to Jesus so that we too can become all that we're meant to become - our very best selves.

J.

Jericho Luke 18:35

It was near the gates of this ancient city that Bartimaeus sat and begged. His shouting annoyed the disciples but Jesus heard him. Are there some people we tend to think shouldn't bother Jesus? I wonder what Bartimaeus did in the weeks after he was healed?

K.

Kerioth Mark 3:19

This is where Judas came from and is the origin of his nickname Iscariot. Do you think

Jesus knew his family? Did Jesus know that he would one day betray him? Why did he choose him? Is there no one Jesus will not give a second chance to? I wonder whether Jesus forgave Judas?

L.

Lebanon Matthew 15:21-22

The district of Tyre and Sidon is in modern Lebanon. Jesus spent time with many who were outsiders to Israel often seeming to be surprised by what they said and did. Sometimes God speaks to us through people of other faiths or none . Have you ever experienced this?

M.

Magdala Matthew 15:39; Luke 8:2

This was a Roman garrison town on the eastern shore of Lake Galilee. Mary Magdalene came from here. She never forgot how Jesus had freed her from all the terrible evil that had gripped her life. Jesus' light is stronger than the darkest forces we might every encounter.

N.

Nazareth Luke 4:16

This was Jesus' home village. They all knew him and it was here he first spoke in a synagogue using the Old Testament to explain who he was and what he had come to do. Why do you think his own people found it so hard to believe in him? Do we sometimes ignore what people say because we have already made up our minds not to listen?

O.

On the mountain Luke 9:28

This may well have been Mount Tabor, where three of the disciples saw Jesus shine with his true heavenly glory and also talk with Elijah and Moses from the past! It was a strange experience. Sometimes God gives us special mystery times of closeness to himself, which help build up our faith. Do you know some examples of this happening?

P.

Pool of Siloam John 9:7

Jesus healed a blind man here. It caused quite a stir in Jerusalem but Jesus kept out the way. He wanted people to know that there are more serious blindnesses from which we need to be healed. In what ways can we be blind to what is important and need Jesus to help us see properly?

Q.

Qumran Mark 1:4

A group called the Essenes - a strict religious Jewish sect - lived here, northwest of the Dead Sea. It was a place with which John the Baptist probably had links and Jesus may have visited. In caves near by Old Testament scrolls were found. These books predicted the coming of Jesus. Do you know some of these prophecies and where to find them?

R.

Ramah Matthew 2:18

Jesus was only a baby when he was near here. It was the site of Rachel's tomb and sadly it was a district that echoed to the cries of mothers who had lost their children, killed by King Herod. Take some time today to think about and pray for all those who are sad

because they have lost someone close to them.

S.

Samaria John 4:3-6

Jesus chose to go here, though most Jews avoided Samaritans. They looked upon them as 'mudbloods' as J.K. Rowling would put it! Jesus didn't divide people up like this. Are there some no-go areas or people that Jesus is asking you to rethink about today?

T.

Temple Mark 11:15

Jesus really surprised people when he turned up at the Temple in Jerusalem. He was angry with the way it was being misused. It's OK to be angry sometimes. What injustices or unfair situations make you angry? What can you do about them?

U.

Upper room Mark 14:15

This upstairs room in Jerusalem's back streets may well have belonged to Mark's family. It was a special place, not just because of the Last Supper but because it later became a meeting room for the Church after Jesus rose from the dead. I wonder how it was furnished and decorated? How would you make a place a special meeting room for Christians?

V.

Villages in Galilee Matthew 4:23

Jesus visited many villages up in the north, preaching and healing people. Can you find out about some of things that happened in these villages? For example in Cana? in Nain? In Bethsaida? In Chorazin?

W.

Wheat fields Mark 2:23

Jesus was wandering in some fields near Capernaum one Sabbath when his disciples felt hungry. They were severely criticized for taking some of the grains to eat. How can we keep the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) special without it being overburdened with dos and don'ts as the Sabbath had become for the Jews?

X.

X marks the spot Mark 15:22

Golgotha. . . The place of the skull. . . Calvary... the place where the cross of Jesus stood. Jesus was taken here by the soldiers to be crucified. This is the place he chose to go for our sake; a place everyone else would have avoided. What places is God calling you to go to do his work, even though they might not be somewhere you would choose yourselves?

Y.

courtYard Mark 14: 66

It was in the yard outside the High Priest's palace that Peter denied knowing Jesus. We would probably done the same but this didn't stop Jesus loving Peter and using him to lead his church. Take a moment to be amazed that God never gives up on us.

Z.

Zebulun Matthew 4:13

This was the area in the north given to the tribe of Zebulun in the Old Testament. Isaiah

prophesied that one-day God's light would shine here (Isaiah 9:1) and indeed it was in this region that Jesus first began to talk about the kingdom. Take a moment to think about the fact that God had planned the sending of Jesus for us so thoroughly and so far in advance.

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