

## Episode 1

## Was Jesus Real?

Archbishop Phillip



**SFC**  
SHORT COURSES

### 1. Who was/is Jesus in a nutshell?

Consider the idea that four portraits would capture a person differently, but feature essentially the same person. How does this influence your understanding of the Gospels' stories and their writers?

Can you think of other parallels? Other things that are treated in the same way? (Images of famous people, remakes of films, films made from books)

What do you find breath-taking about Jesus?

### 2. How do we know Jesus existed?

If Jesus were to turn up in your neighbourhood, what would he have to look like/do/say to convince you that he is part of God?

The Jesus story is still being told – where have you heard it recently?

### 3. How can we trust the Gospels in this regard?

In what ways do you rely on the Gospel accounts of Jesus?

What other evidence do you have for the existence of Jesus? What do you rely on? The Gospels? The writing of Paul? The other letters in the New Testament? Your own experience of Jesus? Your experience of Christian Community?

### 4. For some, the miracle stories make it hard to believe in Jesus. How can we understand these miracles in the 21st Century?

How important is it for you to understand the miracles of Jesus? In what ways do they inform your faith?

Consider the idea that miracles are "enacted parables". We are used to asking about the meaning of parables, so let's have a go with miracles. There are 37 to choose from; read one of the miracle stories. Ask not "How could this happen?" rather, "What does this mean?"

### 5. Over the years, various holy people have said holy things. Why do Christians believe Jesus is different?

What makes Jesus different from other holy people? Most Christians believe that the resurrection is the resounding point of difference for Jesus. What is your response to this statement? Identify other things about Jesus' life and ministry that make him a standout for you.

The disciples looked back and said, "This was God". Describe times in your life when you have stood back and thought that same thing. Perhaps it was about a person's interaction with you, something that happened, a thing you read. What were the clues that led you to decide that God was at work?

### 6. Why does this stuff about Jesus matter so much?

- "Why am I here?"
- "What is the purpose of my life? Of life?"
- "Why is there something and not nothing?"

Discuss other questions in this category. Devise your top 10 Big Questions. Play with the idea that faith in Jesus as God makes sense of these questions. Does having a belief in Jesus make these questions easier to live with?

Discuss the idea that we all have faith; even non-belief is still a theological standpoint, and a statement of faith.

### 7. How did you first encounter the story of Jesus?

### 8. Why does this stuff about Jesus matter to you personally?

Archbishop Phillip gave this summary of why he chooses Jesus: to live close to God, to give myself to others and to work for the community of love, justice and peace. How would you respond to the question: why does Jesus mean so much to you?