

Meeting Jesus

Women of Faith from
the New Testament



Jenna Kavonic

Series Editor: Tim Chester










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Introduction: Good Book Guides

Every Bible-study group is different—yours may take place in a church building, in a home, in a cafe, on a train, over a leisurely mid-morning coffee or squashed into a 30-minute lunch break. Your group may include new Christians, mature Christians, non-Christians, mums and tots, students, businessmen or teens. That’s why we’ve designed these *Good Book Guides* to be flexible for use in many different situations.

Our aim in each session is to uncover the meaning of a passage, and see how it fits into the ‘big picture’ of the Bible. But that can never be the end. We also need to appropriately apply what we have discovered to our lives. Let’s take a look at what is included:

-  **Talkabout:** most groups need to ‘break the ice’ at the beginning of a session, and here’s the question that will do that. It’s designed to get people talking around a subject that will be covered in the course of the Bible study.
-  **Investigate:** the Bible text for each session is broken up into manageable chunks, with questions that aim to help you understand what the passage is about. **The Leader’s Guide** contains **guidance on questions**, and  additional ‘follow-up’ questions.
-  **Explore more (optional):** these questions will help you connect what you have learned to other parts of the Bible, so you can begin to understand how the Bible fits together as a whole.
-  **Apply:** As you go through a Bible study, you’ll keep coming across **apply** sections. These are questions to get the group discussing what the Bible teaching means in practice for you and your church.
-  **Getting personal** is an opportunity for you to think, plan and pray about the changes that you personally may need to make as a result of what you have learned.
-  **Pray:** We want to encourage prayer that is rooted in God’s Word—in line with His concerns, purposes and promises. So each session ends with an opportunity to review the truths and challenges highlighted by the Bible study, and turn them into prayers of request and thanksgiving.

The **Leader’s Guide** and introduction provide historical background information, explanations of the Bible texts for each session, ideas for **optional extra** activities, and guidance on how best to help people uncover the truths of God’s Word.

Why study 'Meeting Jesus'?

*Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord
has said to her will be accomplished!*

Luke 1 v 45

In an age when women were considered second-class citizens, Jesus met and spent time with a surprising number of them—responding to their needs, treating them with dignity and compassion, and even seeking out those who would not normally have crossed His path. Ignoring the social restrictions of the time, He commended their faith, accepted their love and devotion, taught them and challenged them. Jesus devoted time and care to all sorts of women—the godly, the grieving, the sick, the stressed, the sinful outcasts and even those viewed as foreign 'dogs'.

Through these encounters, we too can discover who Jesus revealed Himself to be—the King promised by God throughout the Old Testament; the 'living water; the forgiver; the healer; the super-abundantly merciful one; the greatest teacher; the resurrection and life; and the conqueror over death. We can also learn what it means to be a woman of faith—humble, willing to obey, devoted, persevering, attentive to Jesus' words and, above all, trusting.

We will see that Jesus wasn't just being 'nice' to women! He wanted to give each of them the opportunity to hear and receive His good news—that however we live, we all need God's forgiveness; that whatever we have done, we can be forgiven by God through Him.

World-wide, the good news of Jesus still transforms the lives of countless women today. By using this Good Book Guide to examine the extraordinary encounters of eight women who met Jesus, you too can learn about His liberating good news, discover what it means to have true faith, and by trusting in Him as your Lord and Saviour, experience His transforming power in your life as well.



Luke 1 v 26-56

FAITH THAT KNOWS GOD

talkabout

1. Think of someone that you trust. Why do you trust that person? What is it that makes them trustworthy?

investigate

Mary is an example of simple trust. She believed the unbelievable—that she, a virgin, would give birth to a son! The alternative was that God wouldn't do what He had said He would do. But she refused to believe that—that really was unbelievable! And so we read Elizabeth's words: 'Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!' (Luke 1 v 45). But how did Mary know that God was trustworthy? And how was she able to believe the impossible?

Read Luke 1 v 26-38

2. What is unusual about the events surrounding Jesus' birth?

3. Try to put yourself in Mary's shoes. How might you have felt in her situation?



4. Look up these Old Testament promises and explain how they are fulfilled in Jesus.

Promise	Fulfilment
2 Samuel 7 v 12–16	Luke 1 v 32–33
Genesis 12 v 1–3	Luke 1 v 54–55

5. Why does the angel Gabriel call Mary 'highly favoured'? (v 28–31)

6. How does Mary respond to the angel's message? (v 34, 38)



apply

7. What can we learn from Mary's wonderful example of how to respond to God in situations that are difficult to understand?

- Imagine you face a situation this week where it is hard to understand what God is doing. What would it look like for you to trust Him as Mary did? What would you do, and not do?



getting personal

It is particularly difficult to trust God when we don't understand what He is doing. We wonder why our good God will allow things that our experience tells us are likely to cause us harm or suffering. How do you react when you don't understand what God is doing? Do you trust God or do you worry? Do you pray or do you complain?

Do you face a situation like this at the moment? What do you need to do?



investigate

▶ Read Luke 1 v 39–56

8. What does 'blessed' mean (v 42, 45, 48)?

9. Why did Elizabeth (v 42) and Mary (v 48, 49) describe Mary as 'blessed'? Is this a blessing that we can receive?

10. In verse 45 Elizabeth mentions another different kind of blessing for Mary. What is the reason for this blessing? Is this a blessing that we can receive?

11. Mary knew about God's character (v 46–50) and actions (v 51–55). That's why she could respond in the way she did. What does her song teach us about:

- God's character?

- God's actions?



12. How do you think Mary knew what God was like?

➔ **apply**

13. How will knowing God and understanding His purposes, as Mary did, help us to trust and praise Him through 'impossible' situations?

14. We get to know more of God's character, promises and plans by reading His Word. How should this affect our attitude to reading the Bible?

 **getting personal**

How well do you feel that you know God—His character, His actions, His promises and His plans? What can you start doing this week to get to know Him better?

 **explore more**

▶ **Read Luke 8 v 19–21 and 11 v 27–28**

Who does Jesus consider to be His mother and brothers—His true family? Who then are truly blessed?

⬆ **pray**

Looking back at question 11, praise God for who He is and what He has done. Make your prayers specific and heartfelt.

Pray that God would help you to respond as Mary did, in situations where it is difficult to trust Him.