**JOURNEYING TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Session 2 of 4

# Rahab

### MEETING AIM

To explore how God includes Rahab, an outsider, in his plans.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Joshua 2

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

It’s easy to look at outsiders and say that they are not part of things, that they don’t deserve to be included. This kind of attitude is common as children and young people grow up and find their place. Excluding others can give a (temporary) sense of being included ourselves. However, in this story, we meet Rahab who, by all measures, should not have been part of God’s story or plan. And yet, God uses her, saves her and even makes her part of Jesus’ family tree.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the young people and spend some time chatting about their week. Share out any refreshments you have brought with you; celebrate in their triumphs and share in their disasters. Perhaps share a little of your week too.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** matchsticks (headless matchsticks are available cheaply from craft shops or online – if you can’t get hold of them, use other tokens such as coins, beads or Lego bricks)

Play the matchsticks Yes / No game: Give everyone three matchsticks. They must mingle around the room asking each other questions. Every time they trick someone into saying yes or no, that person has to give them a matchstick. Players with no matchsticks left can continue to play to try to get some back but the winner after five minutes is the person with most matchsticks.

After the game, ask if there are people who can or can’t be part of God’s plan. Who would they say yes to and to whom would they say no? What qualifies people to be included?

### BIBLE EXPLORATION – 10 mins

Before the session, practise telling the story below yourself, or ask someone else in the group to prepare it. Alternatively, you could film yourself or someone else telling the story.

Gather the group together and explain that Joshua and the Israelites are camping on the banks of the river Jordan. Across the river lies the land that God has promised them. However, there are already people living in the land; the first city the Israelites will come to after crossing the river is Jericho. Joshua sends spies to the city to discover more about it. But the spies become trapped in the home of Rahab – a woman, most likely a prostitute, whose house is in the city walls. Invite them to listen to the story.

There was a pounding on the door. “Rahab, you old witch! Open the door immediately.” The three of them inside the small apartment looked up with a start. One of the men instinctively reached into his coat for the familiar worn hilt of a hidden knife. The other placed a hand on his arm as a signal to wait.

“Quickly! Upstairs!” the woman whispered and pushed the men towards some steps in the corner of the room. “Up onto the roof – there’s some flax up there. Hide yourself.”

The door boomed again. “Woman! We know you’re in there. Open up. You have three seconds before I break the door down.”

“Alright, alright! I’m coming.” She placed a hand on the key, but as she did, she spotted the three cups on the table. She darted back and threw two of them out of the open window, where they disappeared into the darkness.

As she unlocked the door the soldiers barged through, knocking her to one side. There were two of them with more outside. They were heavily armed and one of them lifted a sword to her face. “Where are they?”

“My son is in bed. My sisters live across town. My mother is in the grave. Would you like to speak with her?”

The man twitched as if to slap her with the back of his sword. “Don’t play games with me, you dirty...You are unclean and not even worth my time. You know what I’m talking about. You’ve been seen with two men. Foreigners. We want to speak to them. Where are they?”

He swept his sword along the mantelpiece, smashing the ornaments across the floor. Rahab considered playing dumb with him again, but seeing the look in his eye, thought the better of it. “OK, fine. They were here. But they’ve gone. They said they were Amorite traders. I don’t know anything more.

“Amorite traders! You know who they were. They’re Israelites! The Israelites destroyed the Amorites! They’re dangerous! Have you forgotten what they did to Sihon and Og, the Amorite kings? Do you want them to do the same to us? They are camped across the Jordan. Every scrap of information you gave them helps them plan our annihilation. They won’t leave any of us alive. Do you understand that, Rahab? Not you, your children, or your precious dead mother. If she’s even dead at all, that is. And if she is, they’ll kill her again and scatter her bones on the plains.” He leaned closely into her face to growl the words: “Now. What did you tell them?”

Rahab, leaning back against the mantel to avoid him pressing against her, looked away, forcing tears out of her eyes and feigning a horrified look. “I had no idea they were Israelites; I promise. But I told them nothing. I gave them some food and they got some sleep, then they left. That’s it, I promise. Look, they left at dusk, on foot, just as the gates were closing. If you chase them, you’ll surely catch up with them on horseback.”

The man growled in her face one more time, searching for signs in her eyes that she knew more. He signalled to his partner that they were leaving. “Rahab, we all know what a lowlife you are. Scum that can’t be trusted. But if I find out you know more about this, I’ll be back. They’ll try you for treason, but for me I don’t need a trial. I’ll be the last face you ever see, understood?”

Rahab shivered a nod of scared acknowledgement and locked the door again behind them, listening for their footsteps leaving the courtyard outside.

The two men gingerly appeared again at the top of the stairs. “Are they gone?”

“Yes. But they’ll be back. You’d better go. I’ll let a rope out the window – hide in the hills for a few days until they give up looking for you, then escape back across the Jordan.”

One of the men gently took her elbow, to turn her towards him. “Why are you doing this for us? You’re risking everything.”

“I have no life here, really,” she said, looking up into his eyes. “You heard him. They despise me already. And whatever life we have will soon be gone. You – the Israelites – we know how strong you are, we’ve heard about how you escaped from Egypt and how your God has swept away everyone in your path. Our gods are not like that. They never do anything for us. All I ask is that when you return…when you destroy us…have mercy on my family. Let my family go…please.” She cried real tears now, hiding her sobs behind her hands.

“We’ll remember you,” he replied, lifting her chin with his fingers. “Our leader, Joshua. He’s a good man, fair and forgiving. Tough…but fair. We’ll speak to him. He’ll honour you for helping us, I promise. You can have a new life. Your son too. Leave a red rope hanging out the window. We’ll see it when we come back with our army. We’ll remember you, I promise.”

He took a pouch of coins and his knife from his robe and laid them on the table. “Stay alive until then, won’t you?” He smiled a weary smile, then with barely a look over his shoulder, he took hold of the slender rope she had tied to the sill and clambered out into the warm dark air, followed closely by his fellow spy. “God be with you, Rahab!”

Once the story is over, ask the young people to give their first impressions on what they have heard. Read Joshua 2 to the group and compare the two accounts.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Use the following questions to start discussion. Encourage everyone to contribute:

* How do you feel about this dramatisation? Is it realistic? Do you have a different picture of it in your own head? What would you add or change?
* What was good and impressive about Rahab?
* What was bad or flawed about Rahab?
* Why did the soldiers despise her so much?
* Why did she decide to help the spies?
* What is God looking for in people when deciding who to use for his plans?
* In what ways might we consider ourselves outside of God’s plans?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** a pile of damp sand; 28 small name cards of each person from the following list; matchsticks from ‘Intro activity’; sticky tape; blank cards; marker pens

Scatter the name cards around the floor. Read out the following as they look over the names.

Noah was a drunk.

Abraham was too old.

Isaac was a daydreamer.

Jacob was a liar.

Leah was ugly.

Joseph was abused.

Moses had a stuttering problem.

Rahab was a prostitute.

Gideon was afraid.

Samson had long hair and was a womaniser.

Naomi was a widow.

David was an adulterer (not to mention a murderer).

Elijah was suicidal.

Isaiah preached naked.

Jeremiah was too young.

Jonah ran from God.

Job went bankrupt.

John the Baptist ate bugs.

Andrew lived in the shadow of his big brother.

The Samaritan woman was divorced (more than once).

Martha worried about everything.

Zacchaeus was a cheat.

All the disciples fell asleep while praying (and ran away when Jesus really needed them).

Peter denied Christ.

Mary Magdalene was demon-possessed.

Timothy had an ulcer.

Paul was a Christian-killer.

Oh…and Lazarus was dead.

Tell everyone to look over these names and choose one of these cards that they personally can identify with. Ask them to tape a matchstick to one side of it and symbolically stick it like a flag in the sand. Spend some time reflecting on the similarities and differences between yourself and that character, but finish by thinking of how God used them and how he might use you despite / alongside / because of your shortcomings, your cultural differences or your uniqueness.

Create your own name card and stick it also in the sand.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** sand and name flags from ‘Creative response’

As you all look over the sand with the name flags in it, pray a prayer that recognises that no one has been perfect, but God has used every one that loves him in some way to build his Church throughout history. Finish by reading the above list again, but after each two or three lines say: “And God still used them.” The young people should together reply: “And you will still use me.”

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