

Welcome	Can you think of a time (eg. on a holiday, in your education/ career) when everything apparently went ‘wrong’ for you, but then in the end it turned out for the good?
Worship ideas	Choose worship that exalts God for his mercy, grace and unmerited favour – including that he has given us his Son to die in our place. <i>(NB: 20 files containing about 30 ‘newer’ songs are available to borrow from the office for groups)</i>
Word (refs.↓)	<i>some suggestions for discussion here – you might prefer to look at just one or two of the passages below:</i>
Genesis 29:15-28/ 32:22-31	<p>We have been looking at what Scripture teaches us about God and our life as Christians, through the life of Jacob this month. If you’ve missed it, read quickly through Genesis chs. 25 and 27-28, or the following summary.</p> <p><i>Jacob (Esau’s younger twin) tricked his father Isaac into giving him the blessing due the older son (ch.27) and had then fled to their ‘home town’ of Haran. After meeting with God at Bethel (ch.28) he meets up with his mother’s brother Laban, and his daughters Leah & Rachel, whom he ends up marrying (ch.29).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 29: Laban’s employs trickery in his dealings with Jacob here: compare this to Jacob’s own trickery in his dealings with his brother Esau and with his father Isaac. Can you discern God’s hand in all this? What practical lessons did Jacob learn? • Read on to v.30 (and, if time, 30:25-43): does Jacob’s single-mindedness here, and his determination to press on despite the setbacks, depress or inspire you? <p><i>After 20+ years in Haran, Jacob heads home to meet Esau and Isaac (by now Rebekah has died). In ch. 32 he encounters God at the river Jabbok (a tributary of the Jordan).</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch. 32: look at Jacob’s prayers in vv.9-12 and v.26. Does he seem to be relying mostly on God, or mostly on his own resources? How far do you think these prayers are intended as models for us, or examples of how <u>not</u> to pray? • Does this story suggest that, when we find life a struggle, God will only bless us when we pray in line with v.26? • Did Jacob prevail by his own strength, or by faith? What does this teach us?
Matthew 13:31-33 & 44-52;	<p><i>(alternative study)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch.13: Tease out the main message of the parables of growth in vv.31-33 (mustard seed/ yeast). How do you think God’s kingdom can ‘grow’ in our community? • Vv.44-52 illustrate that people enter the kingdom in different ways. Which resonate with you? Do you feel you have you ‘found God’? Been ‘caught’ by him? Neither? Both? • List some key characteristics of the kingdom of God that are reflected in this chapter. How far do you see these reflected in the life of our church?
Witness	<p>Pray <i>for one or two of the following</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ for your mission link person(s) or project ❖ for opportunities to witness to others about God’s love over this holiday season ❖ for any facing changes in their personal circumstances over the next weeks/ months <p>Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ an activity as a group during July or August to which you can invite those who are not yet Christians (eg barbecue, garden party, outdoor concert/play, etc) ❖ any changes to the pattern of meetings over the next couple of months <p>NB If your group is taking a break over the summer, please let the office or your cluster leader(s) know. Why not plan a simple way of keeping in touch with each other for support, prayer needs, etc. (especially if/ when the group leaders are away).</p>