



A session guide designed to be used in a Christian lunchtime or after school group exploring the question 'What are you looking for?'

If you are looking for a Christmas assembly, check out 'What Are You Waiting For?' - an assembly based on an Advent theme to use in the lead up to Christmas, available on the [schoolswork.co.uk](http://schoolswork.co.uk) website.

We recommend tying that assembly in with this guide - you can even use some of the students you work with in schools to help you deliver that assembly. We are also hoping to come up with a brand new Christmas assembly which we will be adding to the schoolswork plus area of the website, so check that out too. To find something on the site, just pop the item you're looking for in the search bar at the top right of every page, or drop me an email if you're having trouble: [amy.stock@schoolswork.co.uk](mailto:amy.stock@schoolswork.co.uk).

## SESSION GUIDE – WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

**Setting:** Have snacks available and some music playing. You might want to look up the recipe for mini-muffins New Generation provided in the Schoolswork August Issue or some other Christmas based goodies!

**Welcome:** Welcome the students into the session and while you are waiting for everyone to arrive, ask the question "what is the last thing you spent time looking for?". You might want to share a story from your morning where you couldn't find your keys or your something you might have lost in your house. Let everyone talk and be introduced to the group in this way if they are new.

- ▶ **Game 1:** Beforehand you will need to hide lots of pieces of card around the room. (Simply photocopy and cut out the images below or download the PDF from [schoolswork.co.uk](http://schoolswork.co.uk) and print out several times). This game is a very simple treasure hunt where they have to find the pieces of card hidden around the room. If you have lots of students, use different coloured card and get them working in teams with a timer and music playing.
- ▶ **Game 2:** If your students are older or a treasure hunt would be a bad idea, try a game of pairs with the cards. To prepare, print out two copies of the pictures below (or download from [schoolswork.co.uk](http://schoolswork.co.uk)). You can make it more interesting by adding other Christmas related images either by writing or drawing other pictures. To play the game turn all the cards over so that they look identical, then the players take it in turn to turn over two cards at a time to try and find a pair.



## Discussion

Once you have all the pieces of card collected, sit in a circle and lay them out in the middle. Facilitate a conversation about what each one reminds the students of and what they could represent. Write down thoughts and ideas about this on large sheets of paper in the middle of the circle. (At this stage you don't need to connect these things to the Advent season or to Christmas, it's simply a case of recording on paper the objects and what they might symbolise). Here is a list of examples you can use as a reference: the bandaged man could represent pain or being fixed; water could represent life or refreshment; the crown could represent authority or importance; the family picture could show love or reconciliation; the peace fingers show peace and the torch shows light.

Once the items are written down with their meanings, hand out slips of paper with the following Bible verses on and challenge them to match the words with the right image. It is not a hard task but will get them connecting ideas in their minds!

Jesus once again addressed them: "I am the world's Light. No one who follows me stumbles around in the darkness. I provide plenty of light to live in." [John 8:12]

All this comes from the God who settled the relationship between us and him, and then called us to settle our relationships with each other. God put the world square with himself through the Messiah [1 Corinthians 5:17]

He sent me to preach good news to the poor, heal the heartbroken, announce freedom to all captives, pardon all prisoners. [Isaiah 61:1]

I have come that you might have life, and have it to the full [John 10:10]

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you [John 14:27]

He will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Questions to consider as a group

Once all the verses have been placed correctly with the images, explain that each of these images has been carefully chosen to show something different about Christmas and about what thousands of Christians all around the world will be celebrating in a few weeks time.

▶ Think about these questions together:

▶ 1. What might these pictures tell you about what Jesus came to do and be on Earth?

▶ 2. a) Ask everyone in the room to think about when they have ever looked for the following:

- light in a dark situation
- peace when they were worried
- healing when they weren't well
- fun and fulfilment in life
- someone to turn to when life was spinning out of control
- a deep connection with someone else

b) Do they find it easy or difficult to look to God for those things?

3. Finally think as a group how can the message of Christmas help us to look to our faith in God for these things? Where else might God help us find them?

▶ Reflection

Play the song '**Show Me What I'm Looking For**' by **Carolina Liar**.

As the song plays, lay out strips of paper in the middle of the circle with different words typed or written on them:

**Light / Hope / Family / Friendship / Faith / Someone to listen / Fun / Health / Peace / Purpose**

▶ Also have some blank strips of paper available. During the song ask them to pick up one of the slips that stands out to them, or to write their own one, and take this away as a reminder of something to look to God for over the Christmas break. It can be a prayer to ask God to provide someone or something in their lives, or to look to God to play that role.

▶ **Finish**

End by encouraging them to remember how Christmas is a fun time and that as we look for these things that perhaps we feel are missing, that it is just one part of a much bigger whole that makes us who we are. End the session with a short game to send them out.

▶ **Suggestion for outreach or follow up**

The week after this group why not have a Christmas party and invite lots of people who haven't been to the group before – perhaps challenge the students to look for others around school who need encouraging or who might never have been invited to a party before. Ask God what He is looking for in their school.