

# JAMES

8 - WEEK PROGRAM  
FOR YOUTH GROUPS

WHERE THE  
RUBBER  
HITS THE  
ROAD

*Where the Rubber Hits the Road* is an 8-week program for high school aged youth groups. It is written to partner with the **Bible study series** available here: [claytonfopp.com/james-youth-studies](http://claytonfopp.com/james-youth-studies)

This is an 8 week program for young people, either in church youth groups or in school lunch time groups, etc. The various activities included in this program are suited both for students who identify as Christian, and those who do not. Some of the study question in the accompanying study guide will be most suited to students who are Christian or at least familiar with Christian thinking, although there is an anticipation that at least some doing these studies won't call themselves Christian yet, and the introductory questions are generally written in the hope that everyone will be able to answer them, regardless of where they are on their faith journey.

Each session includes a short talk (5 minutes) for one of the leaders to present, a memory verse to be learned, and a theatre sports game. Other activities in the sessions vary. Activities are presented in the suggested order, but timings are not given as different groups will have varying amounts of time available.

In your preparation, you may find it helpful to listen to, watch, or read some sermons from the letter of James here: [claytonfopp.com/james-talks](http://claytonfopp.com/james-talks)

### **Recommended Reading:**

*James* - Tyndale New Testament Commentary. Douglas J Moo.

*The Message of James* - The Bible Speaks Today. J.A. Motyer

*Who Wrote James* [claytonfopp.com/who-wrote-james](http://claytonfopp.com/who-wrote-james)

### **Recommended Watching**

*James*. The Bible Project (8:03) [bibleproject.com/explore/james/](http://bibleproject.com/explore/james/)

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*This introductory session is to give groups a chance to get to know each other, and to introduce group members to the letter of James. If the members of your group are new to each other, or one or more member has joined since you last met, make sure you spend good time in the getting-to-know-you discussions.*

## **Activities**

### Family Relationships

Each pair or small group collects a pile of animal names and animal baby names, and a pile of animal names and collective nouns.

For each animal name, correctly assign its baby name or its collective noun.

### Whistle Wars

In pairs, have one student choose a song and whistle it. Their team mate has to guess the tune. Repeat in an elimination competition until only one pair remains.

### Find a Twin

With all students together, call out a personal characteristic category, and students have to find someone who matches them, ie “school you attend,” “born overseas or not,” “has one sibling,” etc. Avoid physical characteristics and those which highlight difference, race, etc.

## **Holiday Feedback**

If it’s a new term, ask students to share what they did in the holidays.

Sharpen the discussion by asking specifically what they learnt, or who they met.

## **Introduce New Members**

If new members feel comfortable, ask some questions so others can get to know them.

*We once developed a tradition in which newcomers would stand on a particular piece of furniture and answer “would you rather ...?” questions from the group. This became a highly-anticipated part of*

*the group that students that because part of the attraction when other students heard about it.*

### **Introduce Leaders**

Introduce all the leaders, and give students an opportunity to ask questions to get to know the leaders. Even if your group has only one new member this term or week, creating opportunity for questions is an important thing to do.

### **AROMA**

Sessions in this program include an opportunity for AROMA, an easy opportunity for students to share with their peers how they've lived out their faith in simple ways, based on 2 Corinthians 2:15 - 16.

A - Answers to prayer.

R - Readings from God's Word.

O - Opportunities to share your faith.

M - Mission stories.

A - Acknowledging God's Goodness.

Prep a leader or 2 to share first then ask if any students would like to share any encouragements or even tough experiences they've had in any of the areas.

### **Introduce Small Groups**

If your group breaks into smaller groups for study, explain and then divide into groups.

### **Read the Letter of James**

#### **Time Capsule**

Invite each student to write on a piece of paper to be sealed in a "time capsule" which will be opened at the end of the term/year/etc as appropriate.

Ask them to respond to the following statements.

This term, I would like to learn ..... from James.

This term will be a success if ...

I'd like my understanding of Jesus to ...

### **Welcome**

Introduce the theme  
Introduce any visitors  
Pray

### **Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action! Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10. Divide into small groups. Divide into small groups. Larger groups may need to divide into 2.

Leader makes note of who is in which group for future weeks.

Mime the following scenes:

- 1) A person showing favouritism.
- 2) Some facing temptation and succumbing to it.

“Timing is everything”

The rules:

Your 2 scenes are to go for EXACTLY 30 seconds each. No more, no less. You'll need someone to time them as you perform.

1 or 2 people from your group must make sound effects and voices for the duration of each scene.

### **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 1:1 - 18

### **Memory Verse - James 1:17 - “Big Bang!”**

**Preparation:** Write one word of the verse on a number of small pieces of paper. Put each paper inside a balloon and inflate the balloon.

Stand the group in a circle and choose group members to pop the balloons.

Give group members the pieces of paper and assign 2 people to arrange the pieces of paper in order.

Once the verse is in order, say it all together.

Repeat the verse, taking away pieces of paper until the group can say the verse from memory.

## **Short Talk on James 1:1 - 18**

### **Bible Study**

#### **Prayer Time - "Singles"**

Each member of the group finds some space on their own and spends 4 minutes thinking and praying.

What are some temptations I'll face this week?

What particular wisdom do I need to resist?

Pray that God will help you resist temptation.

#### **Can anyone remember the memory verse?**

**Caterpillar Race**

*To play, girls will need to be wearing jeans/trackies, etc.*

Divide into 2 or 3 mixed groups. Each group sits in a line at one end of hall.

Each person puts their ankles on the shoulders of the person in front of them.

On command the “caterpillars” raise up on their hands and make their way to the end of the hall where they turn around and come back.

First team back wins!

**Welcome**

Introduce the theme

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last week (James 1:17)?

Pray

**Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we’re considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10.

Divide into the same groups as last session, newcomers allocated to existing groups.

**“School Days”**

Each group acts out one of the following scenes within a school context.

1) A person forgetting their identity, and wanting to know who they are, but they are only able to speak in negatives.

2) A person who explodes angrily at every person they meet. Their sentences are limited to two words each.

3) Someone who just loves reading the Bible and tells everyone they meet about the Bible. They use “God” in every sentence they speak.

Points will be allocated for school references and creative flair!

“Acrostic”

Rules: Every sentence spoken must begin with a successive letter of the alphabet. You don't have to begin with A.

Each scene must run for at least 1 minute.

## **AROMA**

### **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 1:19 – 27.

### **Memory Verse - James 1:22 - Jigsaw**

*Preparation - Print the verse on a number of pieces of card. Slice the cards up into several pieces and place inside envelopes.*

Divide group into as many groups as there are envelopes. Give each group an envelope and ask them to put the verse together.

The first team who can all say the verse together without looking at it wins!

Come back together as a group and say the verse all together.

### **The Panel**

*Instead of a talk this session invite 3 adults (teachers, church leaders, parents, etc) to form a panel. This needs to be punchy! Short answers, not long answers! It's really important that the leader asking the questions can draw out brief answers.*

*Give these questions to your panel members in advance so they can prepare.*

Tell us briefly who you are.

What's one of the best things you've ever read in the Bible?

Why do you think it's important to read your Bible regularly?

Do you think it's harder to please God when it comes to things you do on your own or in relation to how you treat other people? Why?

What would you say to someone who keeps doing the same wrong thing over and over



## **Bible Study**

**Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 1:22)?**

### **Prayers - “Popcorn”**

Stand in 1 big circle or 2 smaller circles. Encourage every member to pray at least 1 sentence.

Spend a moment thinking what to pray, particularly about reading and obeying God’s Word.

## Session 4      Playing Favourites :: James 2:1 - 13

### **Eye-Witness News**

*Preparation: 2 blindfolds, plus equipment for newspaper hockey (rolled up newspaper for "hockey sticks" etc).*

Ask for 2 volunteers, take them outside and blindfold them. Ask for 2 more volunteers. These 2 are going to play newspaper hockey.

The 2 blindfolded people come back in and "observe" the game of hockey. After a one or two goals are scored, ask the blindfolded people to each give their account of what has just happened.

Repeat as time permits with different players and different observers.

### **Welcome**

Introduce the theme

*Does anyone have a favourite food? Favourite TV show?*

*Favourite subject at school?*

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last week?

James 1:22

Pray

### **Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10.

Divide into the same groups as last session, newcomers allocated to existing groups.

"Speak or Die!"

Each group is given a question to answer, which they must do by one person speaking each successive word of the sentence.

Each member of the group must speak at least 3 times in the answer.

If a person hesitates more than 3 seconds, they have to act out as if they are dying, and the manner of dying is chosen by the audience.

Repeat each group as time permits.

*Questions:*

What's in a chicken nugget?

Why are some people ugly and some people beautiful?

What happens to a clown who is afraid of clowns?

What's the difference between compost and manure?

What is the most annoying thing about boys?

What is the most annoying thing about girls?

What is the worst illness that a person can have?

How do you make a sausage?

How do they make the non-stick stuff stick to the saucepan?

What's the most important question to be asked in a job interview for a funeral director?

Explain Newton's universal law of gravitation.

How do you know when it's time to tune your bagpipes?

## **AROMA**

### **Prayers - "Now/Then/Always"**

Divide into small groups of 4 or less.

Each member of the group prays for something on their mind **now**, something in the future (**then**) and something we can **always** be praying for.

### **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 1:19 - 27.

### **Memory Verse - James 2:1 - "Memory Verse Hacky Sack"**

*Preparation - Get 3 or 4 hacky sacks prior to the session.*

*Write the verse on A4 paper, one for each group, to place on the floor*

Divide into 3 or 4 groups as numbers allow.

Each group must keep the hacky sack off the ground. With each touch the person who plays must say 2 words from the verse. If the hacky sack falls on the ground, the next person must start from the beginning of the verse. The first group to be able to say the whole verse wins.

### **Short Talk on James 1:19 - 27**

## **Bible Study**

### **Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 2:1)?**

What about previous memory verses? *James 1:17 & James 1:22*

**Welcome**

Introduce the theme

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last session?

James 2:1, Or any of the previous memory verses?

Pray

**Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10. Divide into the same groups as last session, newcomers allocated to existing groups.

“Status Switch”

Each group must create a scene in which there is an obvious difference in status between people in the scene.

Before the end of the scene, the relationship must be reversed. How does each person react? Do they miss anything from their previous status?

“Relationships”

Parent and child

Dog and owner

Prison guard and prisoner

Teacher and parent

Cat and canary

Owner and slave

Billionaire and beggar

Leader of the in-crowd and an outcast

Boss and employee

Youth group leader and member

Repeat as time permits.

**AROMA**

## **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 2:14 - 26.

## **Memory Verse - James 2:23 “BucketBall”**

*Preparation: a Bucket and a ball is required for each group.*

*Write the memory verse on a piece of paper for each group.*

Divide into 4 or 5 groups. Each group is attempting to throw a ball into a bucket. A leader will need to stand behind each bucket to return the balls.

If a player gets the ball in the bucket, they are to say a word from the memory verse.

If a player misses, the next player must start from the beginning of the verse.

The first team to get through the verse wins.

Play several rounds.

## **Prayers - “Paper Aeroplane”**

*Preparation: A4 sheets of paper for everyone.*

Make a paper aeroplane. Write your name on it along with one praise point and one prayer point.

*Ensure students know that what they write will be read by others in the group.*

Throw your plane!

Pick up someone else’s plane, find its owner and sit down for 2 minutes to pray for each other’s prayer points.

Throw your plane again and once more find another plane and its owner and pray for them.

Collect all the planes up and throw in the bin before moving on.

## **The Panel “Faith and Deeds”**

*Instead of a talk this session invite 3 adults (teachers, church leaders, parents, etc) to form a panel. This needs to be punchy! Short answers, not long answers! It’s really important that the leader asking the questions can draw out brief answers.*

*Give these questions to your panel members in advance so they can prepare.*

Tell us briefly who you are.

What are some ways people think they can get right with God?

What do you think is the main message of James 2:14 – 16?  
How does this fit with the message of the rest of the Bible?  
What’s the point of “doing good” if we’re saved by grace?  
Have you ever known anyone who called themselves a  
Christians but had no “deeds”? What did you think of their  
life?  
Why do you think it’s important that a Christian lives a good  
life?

## **Bible Study**

**Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 2:23)?**

## Session 6      Watch Your Mouth! :: James 3:1 - 18

### **Table Tennis Soccer**

*Preparation: A table tennis ball for each 2 groups.*

Divide into an even number of teams, ie 4 or 6.

Each team gathers at one end of a table, facing another team.

A table tennis ball is placed in the middle. Each team tries to force it off the other end of the table by blowing.

The first team to 5 points wins.

Rotate different teams to play against each other.

### **Welcome**

Introduce the theme

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last week?

James 2:23

Pray

### **Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10. Divide into the same groups as last session, newcomers allocated to existing groups.

“Paper chase”

*Preparation: Paper and pens for everyone*

Everyone is asked to write something on a piece of paper. Either an object, a feeling or a location.

These are collected up and kept separately.

Each team is then given an object, a feeling and a location and has 30 seconds to plan a scene based on them.

Additional objects, feelings or locations may then be given to be worked into the scene.

### **AROMA**



## **Pairs Popcorn**

Divide the group into pairs. Each person shares one or two prayer points with their partner.

After 3 minutes, come back to the large group and stand in a circle, facing in.

Each person prays in 1 sentence for their partner.

If time permits, divide up into different pairs and repeat.

## **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 3:1 – 18

## **Memory Verse - James 3:6 - “Stand and Shout”**

*Preparation: Write the memory verse on a whiteboard or Powerpoint slide in 3 different colours. Colour approximately according to noun, verb, other, or some similar scheme.*

Divide the group into 3 and assign each group one of the colours. Everybody reads the verse, with each group standing and shouting their words each time.

Do this once or twice then give each group a different colour and repeat.

## **Short Talk on James 3:1 - 18**

## **Bible Study**

**Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 3:6)?**

## Session 7 What's in Your Heart? :: James 4:1 - 12

### **Desert Island**

Go around the group sharing answers to the questions:

*If you were stuck on a desert island what one item from among your possessions would you like to have with you?*

*Which person, alive or dead, would you wish to be there too?*

*What would you miss most about your current life?*

*What aspect would you look forward to the most?*

### **Welcome**

Introduce the theme

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last week (James 3:6)?

Pray

### **Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

Members will be competing over the following weeks for the prize and the glory! Teams will be scored out of 10. Divide into the same groups as last session, newcomers allocated to existing groups.

“Reduction”

Each team is given a scene to act out.

The scene must be completed in under 45 seconds.

The team then has to act the same scene in 30 seconds

Then under 20 seconds.

Then under 5 seconds.

*Scenes:*

*The surrender of the Germans at the end of World War 1*

*A funeral for a very old man or woman*

*A court proceeding with a lawyer asking lots of questions*

*Surgeons performing heart surgery when something goes wrong*

***This is the last week of this program to present a prize to the team with the highest scores over the previous weeks!***

## **AROMA**

### **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 4:1 - 12

### **Memory Verse - James 4:7 - 8 - “Blindfolds”**

*Preparation: Write 1 or 2 words of the memory verse on pieces of paper.*

*You will need as many blindfolds as you have pieces of paper.*

Give each piece of paper with words from the verse on it to a member of the group.

Blindfold everyone who has a piece of paper.

They now need to arrange themselves in order.

Other members of the group may call out to those blindfolded but may not touch them.

When the verse is in the right order, take all the blindfolds off and read the verse a couple of times together.

*Collect up all the paper and blindfolds.*

### **Prayers - “Pick your own country”**

Divide into groups of 4 or 5.

Within each group, choose a country to pray for.

Suggestions for prayers include safety, stability, food affordability, Christians who live there, missionaries who work there, etc.

### **Short Talk on James 4:1 - 12**

### **Bible Study**

**Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 4:7 - 8)?**

**Build it!**

If your group is large, divide into groups of 5 or 6. Groups are given 1 minute to form an object using their bodies, either in 2D or 3D. Leaders or other groups score the efforts. Award extra points for moving parts, or sound effects!

Objects might include:

*Aeroplane*

*Blender*

*Washing machine*

*Atom*

*Firework*

*Statue of Liberty*

*Sydney Harbour Bridge*

*Horse and carriage*

**Welcome**

Introduce the theme

Introduce any visitors

Can anyone remember the memory verse from last week (James 4:7 - 8)?

Pray

**Theatre Sports Cup**

Introduce the Theatre Sports Cup. Explain that since we're considering faith in *action*, we want to see some action!

This is the last week for the Theatre Sports Cup!

Divide into small groups. Larger groups may need to divide into 2.

Leader makes note of which group new people join for future weeks.

“Experts”

One player from each team pretends to be an expert on a topic selected by the audience. Another member of the team interviews the first player as if on a television talk show.

Possible topics

*The latest European craze for guys to seem more attractive to girls.  
The effects of magnetism on sub-atomic particles.  
Exercises that instantly relieve constipation.  
The mating habits of Javanese Orang-utans  
A new type of teddy bear which has special features.*

## **AROMA**

### **Prayers - “Pick your own missionary”**

*Preparation: Collect information on a number of the missionaries supported by the church, or connected to your denomination. One group member may even like to “present” this information on the night.*

Divide into as many groups as you have missionaries. Each smaller group either reads the information about the missionary or is presented the information by someone already prepared. After 3 – 5 minutes of sharing, pray for that missionary.

Suggestions for prayers include safety, good relationships with locals and other missionaries, health, opportunities to share their faith, good time with local Christians, etc.

### **Bible Reading**

Choose someone from the group to read James 5:13 – 20.

### **Memory Verse - James 5:16 - “Big Bang!”**

*Preparation: Write one word of the verse on a number of small pieces of paper. Put each paper inside a balloon and inflate the balloon.*

Stand the group in a circle and choose group members to pop the balloons.

Give group members the pieces of paper and assign 2 people to arrange the pieces of paper in order.

Once the verse is in order, say it all together.

Repeat the verse, taking away pieces of paper until the group can say the verse from memory.

*Collect up all the paper and balloons.*

### **Short Talk on James 5:13 - 20**

## **Bible Study**

**Can anyone remember the memory verse (James 5:16)?**

**If you are opening the time capsule at the end of this program, do it now!**



