

SCROLLING FOR TRUTH

YOUTH GROUP SESSION / BIBLE STUDY

URBAN
SAINTS

LEADERS NOTES

Every day we can scroll past hundreds of messages, videos, opinions and images online. Some of them are helpful and true. Some are misleading, edited or just completely false. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference.

In this session, we're going to explore why truth matters, how easy it can be to believe something that sounds convincing, and what the Bible has to say about checking what we hear. We'll also think about how asking good questions can help us grow in wisdom as we navigate life online, whether we're thinking about everyday information or questions about the Christian faith.

While the digital world is new, the need to discern truth from distortion is not. The New Testament gives several examples of misinformation causing confusion in the early church. After Paul had planted the churches in Galatia for example, other teachers arrived and began telling the Christians something different. They claimed that faith in Jesus alone was not enough, and that Gentile (non-Jewish) believers also needed to follow certain Jewish laws. In doing so, they were changing the core message of the gospel that Paul had originally taught.

In **Acts 17** (the focus of this study), Luke describes how two different groups of people reacted when Paul shared his message about Jesus.

Paul presented the gospel in a logical and thoughtful way. He used Scripture and reasoning to explain why he believed Jesus was the Messiah.

Luke contrasts two very different responses to Paul's message. Some reacted with hostility and disorder, while the Bereans listened carefully and examined the Scriptures for themselves.

The passage shows that the gospel challenges us to think about, question and test, rather than simply accept blindly. This is why the Bereans are praised: they listened, but they also checked what they were hearing.

INTRO

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STARTING ACTIVITY

FACT OR FAKE ? ? ?

Tell the young people you're going to read several statements and they must vote FACT or FAKE. You could ask young people to move and stand on the side of the room you allocate for Fact or Fake.

Octopuses have three hearts.



Humans only use 10% of their brains.

It's a myth, in reality we use almost all of our brain.



Goldfish only have a memory of three seconds.

This is a myth. Goldfish can actually remember things for months, and they can even be trained to respond to signals for food.



Sharks existed before trees.

Sharks appeared on Earth around 400 million years ago, while trees only began growing about 350 million years ago.



Lightning never strikes the same place twice.

Lightning can strike the same place many times. Tall buildings like the Empire State Building get struck dozens of times each year.



Bananas are technically berries and strawberries are not.

In botanical terms, bananas qualify as berries, while strawberries actually don't.



Humans swallow around eight spiders a year while sleeping.

This is a widely repeated internet myth. There is no evidence that people regularly swallow spiders in their sleep.



Putting your phone in a microwave will charge it.

This fake "life hack" circulated online years ago and some people actually tried it. Microwaving a phone will destroy it and could start a fire. So don't do that!



After this activity ask:

Were you always right?

The things we hear or see online can often sound convincing even when they aren't true. Online, that can happen even more easily because things are shared quickly, confidently and without much checking.

EXTRA ACTIVITY

Choose an online quiz to see how good the young people are at recognising fakes and misinformation.

Can you spot which of the 2025 news articles are fake? - [click here](#)

Can you spot the difference between the real images and ones created by AI? - [click here](#)



DISCUSS:

- Share something you found out online recently that was genuinely helpful.
- What's the weirdest or most unbelievable thing you've seen online recently?
- Is it always easy to tell if something is untrue or if an image has been edited or AI-generated?
- What kind of damage can happen when false information or fake images are shared?

Gossip, upset, social fallout, trolling of celebrities, untrue health scares, anxiety, abuse, making decisions based on false information, extremism.

BIBLE PASSAGE

The digital world may be new, but the need to discern truth from distortion is not. In the New Testament, we often see people responding in different ways to what they hear about Jesus. In Acts 17, Luke shows us one example of this.

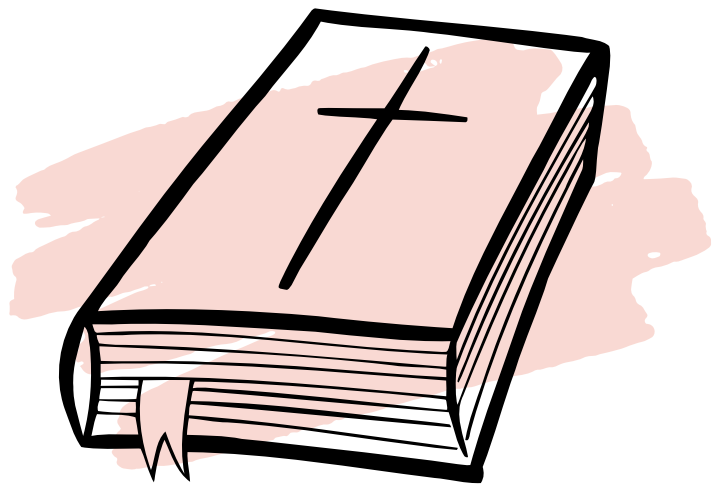
Read Acts 17:10–12

DISCUSS:

- What do you notice about how people responded to Paul's message?
- What stands out to you about the Bereans?
- Why do you think they examined the Scriptures for themselves?
It may have been risky to believe the message and share it with others. Followers of Jesus were being persecuted. It could have been damaging if wrong.
- What does this passage suggest about questioning, listening and searching for truth?
- Do you think asking questions is healthy for faith? Why or why not?
- Where do people your age usually go when they want answers about God, life or faith?

You could then say:

The Bereans were open to hearing Paul, but they also took time to check what he said. They didn't reject his message straight away, but they didn't accept it blindly either. They listened, thought, and looked carefully at Scripture. This can be a helpful model for us as well.



SIFT METHOD

When scrolling content online, it can help to have the SIFT method in mind. Pioneered by digital literacy expert Mike Caulfield, SIFT offers a simple framework for asking thoughtful questions, helping young people reflect on what they've seen, and guiding conversations that provide both support and gentle challenge. This can apply to anything they encounter online, whether secular or Christian in content.

S - STOP

Before reacting or sharing content with others, take a moment to pause and reflect.

- How confident are you that it's actually true?
- Could this be hurtful or damaging to someone?

I - INVESTIGATE

Look at who created the post, video, or article. Are they someone who knows a lot about this topic? Is it a real organisation, news company, or expert, or just a random account? Sometimes people online pretend to know things when they actually don't, or they might not be correct in the information they are sharing.

- Do you know anything about the person or organisation sharing this?
- Are they qualified to talk about this topic, or are they just sharing an opinion?



F - FIND

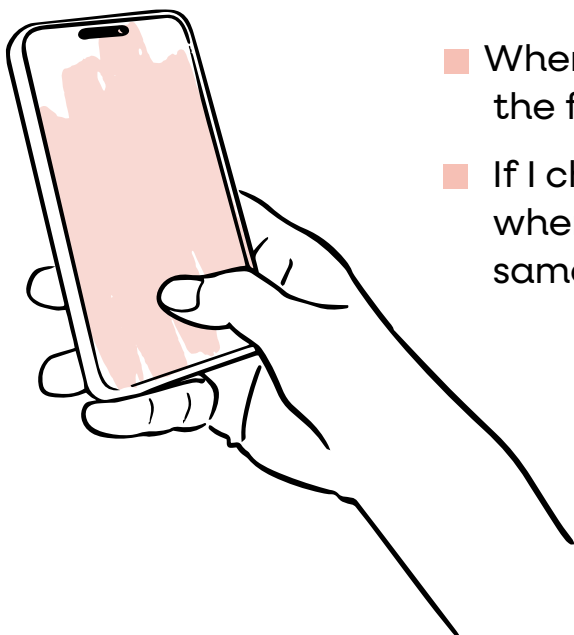
Encourage young people not to rely on a single post, video, or influencer. Try looking to see if other trusted and credible places are talking about the same thing. If something is really true or important, other reliable sources will usually report it as well.

- Do other trusted and credible sources agree with the information stated?
- How might you check this out?

T - TRACE

Sometimes pictures, quotes, or stories are shared without the full context. Try to find where the information first came from. Was the photo edited? Was the quote said in a different situation? Going back to the original source can help you understand what really happened.

The same applies to the Bible, it's easy to find Bible verses online that have been interpreted differently to what the wider context of the passage is all about. This is something we should be mindful of as we help young people grapple with faith questions.



- Where did this information come from in the first place?
- If I check the information against the where it came from, does it still hold the same truth?

DISCUSS:

- In what ways did the Bereans do something similar to this?
The Bereans paused, checked what they were hearing, and looked back at Scripture to see whether it was true.
- Before sharing or believing something online, what could we do to check whether it is true or trustworthy?
- Who do you trust to ask when you have questions about faith?
- What Bible apps, websites, guides or people might help someone explore faith well? Any you use or find helpful?

A CLOSING CHALLENGE

This week, as you scroll, pause and ask:

- Is this true?
- Where has it come from?
- Can I trust it?
- Have I checked it?

Try using the SIFT method before believing, sharing or reacting to something online.

PRAY

Look up the following verses together and pray together for wisdom and discernment as everyone in the group navigates the online world.

1 Thessalonians 5:21 - “Test everything. Hold on to what is good.”

1 John 4:1 - “Dear friends, do not believe everyone who claims to speak by the Spirit. You must test them to see if the spirit they have comes from God. For there are many false prophets in the world.”