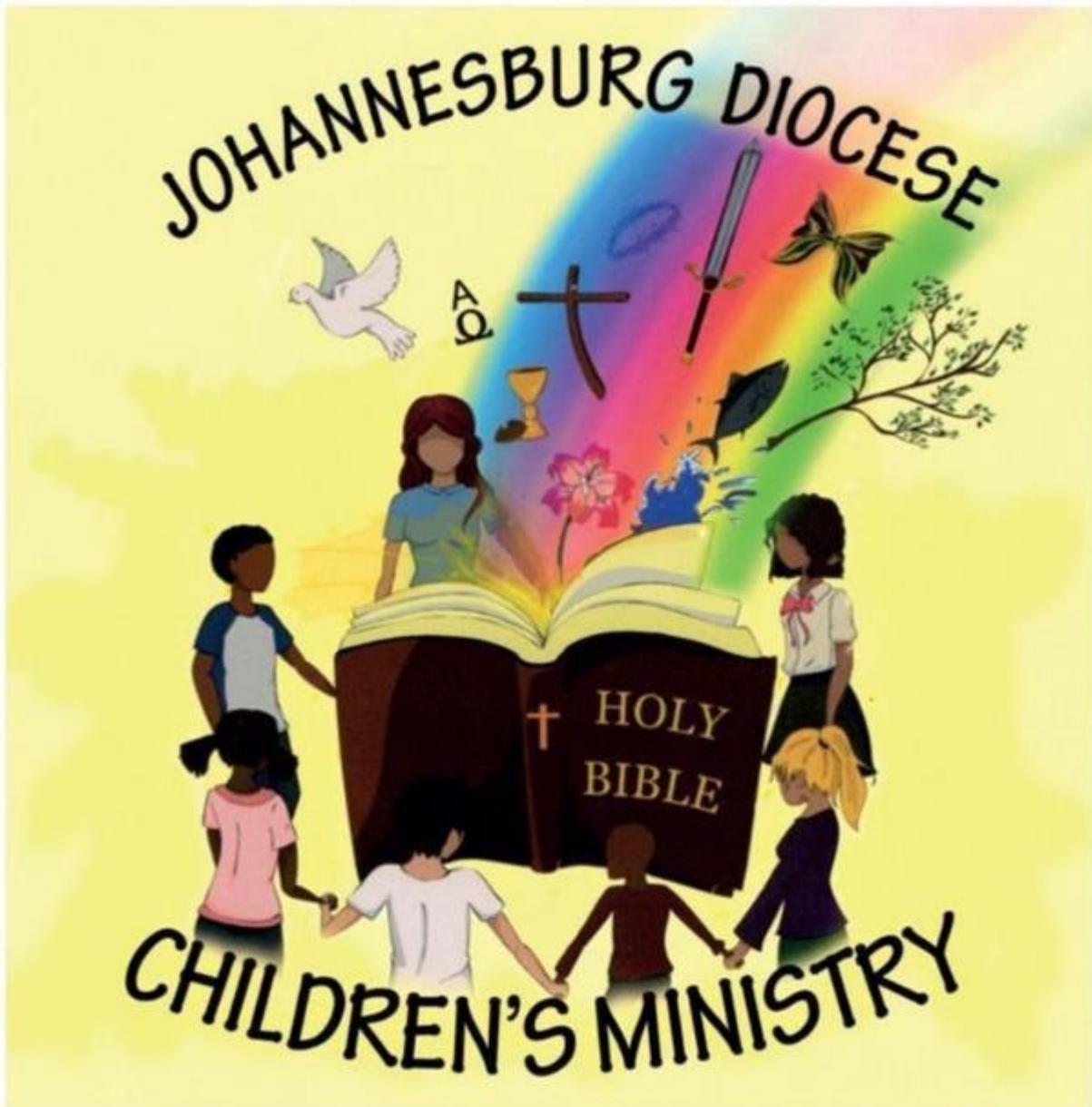


**SUNDAY SCHOOL
CURRICULUM
AND
LESSON PLANS**



**Manual Two
2021**

INTRODUCTION

To all Sunday School Teachers

This is the second manual for Year B in our Anglican series of Sunday School lessons. It focuses on the stories from the Old Testament. Unfortunately, the set Old Testament readings do not lend themselves to providing an overview of the history of the Israelites and the books of Joshua and Judges. Hence, we have diverged from the set readings and instead followed a chronological set of stories from the entry into Canaan and the challenges and battles experienced by the Israelites to the times of the judges, and the story of Ruth and Israel's kings.

A huge challenge that we face in teaching these stories is that of context. The paradigm of exodus, conquest and exclusion and the patriarchal nature of the texts is no longer appropriate for today. The Exodus is often seen in the light of liberation of an oppressed people. The conquest and invasion of the land is justified as the Israelites are portrayed as the chosen people of God, but in the modern world this raises questions. That is not to say that we change or dismiss the biblical texts but we read them in the light of the New Testament and our own context.

While our focus is on the Old Testament, during the month of September our lessons fall in line with the Diocese of Johannesburg's commitment to celebrating the Season of Creation. It is the fifth mark of mission of the Worldwide Anglican Church to strive to safeguard the integrity of Creation and sustain and renew the life of the planet. Hence, we use the Season of Creation to inspire the children to care more for God's Creation.

You are once again reminded of the excellent training offered by the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg. For further details, see (www.anglicanjourg.org.za) – look for the link to the Sunday school / Children's Ministry.

God bless you all!

Diocese of Johannesburg Children's Ministry

Curriculum

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An amazing race through the book of Genesis

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: *Stories from the book of Genesis*

Theme: *Some knowledge of some of the stories in the book of Genesis*



Information for the teacher:

This lesson revises the stories of the book of Genesis, which were covered during Year A. This was a while ago for the children to remember and research shows that many children attend Sunday school irregularly and so it is a chance to teach these stories and fill in the gaps in the children's knowledge of them. Many regard these stories as myths rather than being literally true. The stories teach truths about God and human nature whether they are literally true or not and are part of the Christian tradition and so they are important for the children to know. The stories cover the story of Creation through to Joseph. The aim of today's lesson is to remind and teach the children the stories, and to do this in a fun way!

The suggestion for today's lesson is to set up an "Amazing Race" for the children to complete, with each stage of the race covering a different story from Genesis. Guidelines are given in the lesson as to how to conduct this race, but the success of this lesson is very much dependent on the teacher and the amount of thought that is given in planning for this lesson. It is important for teachers to create lessons that they feel comfortable with. It is also very important for each teacher to consider his or her own circumstances – the number of children in your class and amount of time available for the lesson will influence how you structure your lesson.

An alternative option to the "Amazing Race" idea is offered in the younger children's section - the younger children may find some of the challenges of the "Amazing Race" too difficult, and you the teacher, may prefer a more conventional lesson. You may consider combining ideas from both lesson options.

So, let your imagination "go wild", and most importantly, have fun!!

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To teach the children about the stories found in the book of Genesis
- To have fun!

Lesson Structure:

Page through the Bible, starting with the Creation Story and ending with the story of Joseph.

The stories we suggest you cover are:

1. The story of Adam and Eve
2. Noah's Ark
3. Tower of Babel
4. Abraham
5. Jacob and Esau
6. Joseph

A summary of each of these stories can be found at the end of this lesson. Note that the Creation Story is not included as this will be discussed during the Season of Creation.

Ask the children what each story is about and ask a few questions, based on the age group of your class. Instead of paging through the bible, little play figures and props can be used to represent the stories e.g. a picture of a boat to represent Noah's Ark, or a colourful coat to represent the story of Joseph. These can then be used to start further discussion of these stories. If you know songs that go with these stories, do include them.

Another suggestion is to use a "Stations of the Cross" format, where a picture of each story is put in a different area of the Sunday School – the children then need to look for the picture of the story which comes first in the Bible i.e. The story of Adam and Eve. The group then gathers at this first picture. Once the discussion about this story is complete, the children then try to find the picture for the second story i.e. Noah's Ark.

During the lesson, or at the end of the lesson, you may want to make use of or adapt some of the games found in the "Amazing Race" in the Older Children's section, or you can think of other games that may be suitable for a particular story.

Another option is to divide the children into groups and each group is given a story to act out for the other groups. This can also work with the older children.

Pictures illustrating the stories taught can be found at the end of the lesson. Each child can colour in these pictures and create their own "mini-bible". Another option is to give each child one of these pictures to colour in, and then put the pictures on a board to create a time-line. A third option is for each child to draw their favourite story from those we have discussed today.

Don't forget to say a prayer at the end of the lesson. May you and your class have fun today!



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the stories found in the book of Genesis
- To have fun!

Lesson structure:

As mentioned in the introduction to today's lesson, the children will be learning about the first few stories in Genesis, most of which were covered in Year A of this Curriculum. The children, will find an "Amazing Race" a lot of fun, which is one of the objectives for today!

For the "Amazing Race" idea to work, it is very important that you, the teacher consider your own circumstances i.e. the number of children in your class and amount of time available for the lesson and adapt accordingly. It is suggested that there are a maximum of 5 children per group, but this may not be possible due to the size of your Sunday School and number of teachers.

It is probably easiest to give each group a certain amount of time for each stage of the race. If you have a 45-minute session in which to play the game, then each stage would need to take approximately 5 minutes so that you have time at the end of the race to discuss answers. If a group finishes an activity and there is time to spare, it is important for you to have extra questions available for the group to answer. If they answer these questions correctly, extra points can be added to their overall score. You need to decide if the groups need to write down or simply tell you their answers – this would probably depend on the number of groups completing a task at a given time. You could possibly go through the answers with the children if there is time before they move on to the next stage.

A summary of each story can be found at the end of this lesson from which you can base your questions for each stage of the race. Keep the answers to the questions short, this is supposed to be fun!!

It is important for Bibles to be available for children to make use of when they are not sure of an answer – you should refer them to where the story is found in the bible if they cannot find it. A children's bible would be better for this lesson as the stories are too long in a normal bible.

It is important for you to keep a record of the number of points each team scores for every activity. Points are awarded to the teams at each stage of the game depending on the number of correctly answered questions and how well they complete the activity for each stage.

Ideally, a teacher or a leader should be placed at every stage. If this is not possible, all the groups will need to complete each stage at the same time. This of course would require more sets of material for each stage.

It is not necessary to start at stage 1 – some groups may need to start at another stage and then work through all the stages from that particular stage. It is important that stage 3 follows on from stage 2, and stage 4 after stage 3. Stage 1 would follow on from stage 6 if the group had not started at stage 1 at the beginning of the race.

The "Amazing Race" as proposed in this lesson has 6 stages, based on the stories covered last year from the book of Genesis. These 6 stages are:

1. The story of Adam and Eve
2. Noah's Ark
3. Tower of Babel
4. Abraham
5. Jacob and Esau
6. Joseph

Here are the activities suggested for each stage. Once again, adapt or change, as you feel necessary:

Stage 1:

The children need to draw a picture of the first family that God created using any part of their body other than their hands.

The children need to label the members of this family. The members of this family were Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel. Special note should be made if they remember to include Seth.

Remember to have more questions available to ask the children should they finish the task before the time limit for this stage

Stage 2:

On one side of the room have a large number of boxes. On the other side of the room there should be a sign that says "dry land. Instruct the groups to make a "boat" out of the boxes. The "boat" needs to be big enough for the whole group to get into. They will need to move the "boat" from one side of the room to the other.

Once the group gets to "dry land" they can receive questions relating to this story, one of which should be: Which story from the book of Genesis is this activity based on?

NB: You can ask your supermarket if they have any boxes for you to use. If you have small boxes, you will need to provide the children with tape for them to make a "boat" big enough to move them all to "dry land".

Another option is to provide each group with a hoola-hoop or a rope tied in a circle that the whole group needs to "get into" and move towards dry land. If there are too many children to fit in the "boat", then the "boat" would need to come back for the other children.

Stage 3:

Place the questions for this stage at a high point in the room. The children need to use their bodies in order to get the question. No other objects may be used in the room in order to get it. To make this challenge even harder the groups are not allowed to speak during this activity.

This task would probably involve the children making a human tower. If you are concerned that this task is too dangerous, the activity could involve building a tower using paper cups, marshmallows, stones or anything else that you can stack. The team that builds the highest tower would be the winning team. Again, the team members would not be allowed to speak.

Examples of questions that the children would need to answer for this activity could be:

1. Which story from the book of Genesis is this activity based on?
2. Why do you think you were not allowed to talk during this task?

Stage 4:

There needs to be a bowl of salt on one side of the room. An empty bowl of salt is placed on the other side of the room. The children need to transfer salt from the bowl containing salt to the empty bowl. This can either be done using straws or a teaspoon. Only one child can transfer salt to the other bowl at a time.

At the empty bowl there needs to be questions on the story of Abraham, each written on a separate piece of paper. The child needs to pick up one of these questions, return to the group by the other bowl of salt. The group needs to try to answer the question. Even if the group is not able to answer the question, the next child is sent to transfer salt to the other bowl and bring back a question. This continues until all the questions have been answered.

If there is still time remaining once all the questions have been answered, the remaining time can be spent transferring salt to the bowl which was originally empty. Extra points can be given to the team who transfers the most amount of salt.

Here are examples of questions you could ask:

1. Who was the father of many nations?
2. Who was Abraham married to?
3. What was the name of Abraham and Sarah's son?
4. What was the name of Abraham's nephew?
5. Why does this task involve salt?

Stage 5:

True or false

A group is given 2 signs, one saying "True" and one saying "False". The teacher or leader at this activity will ask a question. If the group thinks the statement is correct, they will hold up the "true" sign, and if the group thinks the statement is false, they will hold up the "false" sign. All the questions must be answered before they are told how many questions they answered correctly.

They will be given a mark out of 5 e.g . 4/5. Do not tell the group which of their answers are correct. The group then needs to try to work out which questions they got wrong – they may consult a Bible if they wish. The group then returns and answers the questions again. If they are able to answer all questions correctly within the time limit, have more questions available to ask them - if they answer the questions correctly, add this to their score.

Here are examples of questions that can be asked. The group must work together and can discuss amongst themselves before giving an answer:

1. Isaac married Rebekah. *(T)*
2. Isaac's children were Jacob and Saul. *(F)*
3. Jacob was the older brother and had red hair. *(F)*
4. Esau gave Jacob his birthright in return for a bowl of soup. *(T)*
5. Esau deceived his father by pretending to be Jacob. *(F)*
6. In later life, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. *(T)*

Stage 6

An obstacle course needs to be set up. The group tie themselves together with rope or string. They then need to do the obstacle course tied together. The obstacle course can include climbing over and under

obstacles. A simple obstacle course can be set up using tables and chairs although the course should be set up so that the children climb under tables and over chairs, else you risk damaging tables.

Words relating to the story of Joseph can be placed along the course. The children need to remember these words as they move along the course.

Once completed the children need to remember the words they saw during the obstacle course and then explain how each word relates to the story of Joseph. Words such as coat, dream, baker, Potiphar etc can be included.

If the children correctly complete this task before the time limit for this stage, they can be given more words – this can be added to their overall score for the competition.

Once the groups have completed all the stages, the children can return to their class. It is important for the teacher to go through the answers to the questions if this was not done during the race as one of the main objectives of this lesson is to revise the stories of Genesis.

Emphasise that these stories are all found in the book of Genesis. Ask the children if they know what the next book of the Bible is? (*Exodus*)

Do they know what story follows Joseph? (*The story of Moses – this we will discuss next week*)

The winning team can then be announced.

Once the children have revised the stories of Genesis, and there is still some time available, a final game could be as follows:

Each child is given a character from the book of Genesis. The child then needs to find their partner e.g. A child could be given the character, Adam. This child would then need to find the person who has been given the character, Eve.

Some examples of such pairs are: Adam and Eve; Jacob and Esau, Joseph and Benjamin; Isaac and Rebekah; Abraham and Sarah; Cain and Abel.

If a child's partner is already taken by another character, the child would then need to find another suitable partner, or else convince the pair that has already formed that they perhaps need to split so that everyone can find a suitable partner.

If there are more children than characters, then split the children into groups. The children can play the game within their group and there can be a competition between the groups as to which group can find all their partners first.

The children can also be asked to explain the connection between the 2 names in the pair and the pairs can also arrange themselves in the order in which these characters appear in the Bible.

There are many modifications to this game e.g. a child could be given the name of a Bible character and then find a group that he / she belongs to, not just a partner e.g. if a child is given the name Adam, this child would need to find the group containing Eve. Other members of this group would include Cain, Abel and Seth.

A final modification to this game, which would however take more time, is to put a sticky label with the name of a bible character from Genesis onto the back of each child – the child does not know which character he/she is, and needs to ask others questions in order for the child to guess which Bible character

he/she is. The child can only ask “yes” / “no” questions such as, “Am I a male?”; “Did my dad buy me a coat of many colours?” etc

Don’t forget to end this lesson with a prayer!

Summary of the Bible stories found in the book of Genesis

The Story of Adam and Eve

(Gen 1 -4)

God created a beautiful and perfect world. He made Adam and Eve and they lived in the Garden of Eden. However, they sinned by eating fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and had to leave the Garden of Eden.

Adam and Eve had 2 sons – Cain and Abel. Cain was the first born and worked the soil. Abel was an animal herder. Cain and Abel both offered sacrifices to God. God was pleased with Abel’s offering but not Cain’s. In a fit of anger, Cain killed Abel. When God asked Cain where his brother was, Cain famously replied, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Cain had to leave his family and wander around for the rest of his life – he went to live in the land of Nod.

Adam and Eve had another child named Seth.

Noah’s Ark

(Gen 6-9)

Noah was a descendent of Seth. God told Noah to build an ark and that he must collect a male and female of every animal. It then rained for 40 days. After the flood, Noah sent out a dove. It came back, for the waters still covered the earth. 7 days later he again sent out the dove. It came back with an olive leaf – Noah knew there must be land that was no longer covered in water. After another 7 days Noah sent out the dove once again. It never came back. Noah then knew it was safe to leave the ark. God sent a rainbow to remind Noah and all humankind of God’s faithfulness to God’s promises. Noah had 3 children named Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Tower of Babel

(Gen 11)

The people of the world built a tower as a monument to their own greatness. The people had lost focus of God. Because of this God made the people speak in different languages so that they could not understand each other and scattered the people across the world. The tower was known as Babel as it was there that the Lord confused the languages of the whole world.

Abraham

(Gen 12 -19)

Abraham came from the land of Ur. He was married to Sarah. They were very old and had no children. Sarah was 90 years old when an angel told her she was to have a child. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah.

Abraham had a nephew named Lot. Lot lived near Sodom, a city filled with evil. Sodom was about to be destroyed. An angel was sent to save Lot and his wife. Lot and his wife were told not to look back as they left Sodom, but Lot’s wife did look back and she turned into a pillar of salt. Abraham is known as the “Father of many nations”

(Other points that can be included: Abraham was originally known as Abram and Sarah as Sarai; Isaac means laughter; Abraham also had a son with Hagar, named Ishmael. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac, but at the last moment, God provided a ram to sacrifice instead.)

Jacob and Esau (Gen 24 – 33)

Isaac married Rebekah. They had twin boys named Jacob and Esau. Esau was the older brother – he had red hair, was very hairy and a hunter. Jacob was the younger brother – he was smooth, not hairy and preferred to stay at home and help with the cooking. Isaac favoured Esau while Rebekah favoured Jacob.

Esau gave his birthright to Jacob in return for a bowl of stew. When Isaac was very old and could not see, Jacob deceived Isaac. With the help of Rebekah, Jacob covered his hands with goatskin so that they felt rough, so that Isaac thought he was blessing Esau, the eldest son.

Jacob then had to flee to Laban, brother of Rebekah, who he then worked for. He wanted to marry Rachel, Laban's daughter. After 7 years work Jacob married who he thought was Rachel, but it was actually her older sister Leah. This time it was Jacob who had been deceived! Jacob was then also given Rachel as his wife but in return he needed to work another 7 years for Laban.

Later in life, God changed Jacob's name to Israel. After many years, Esau and Jacob were finally reunited.

Joseph

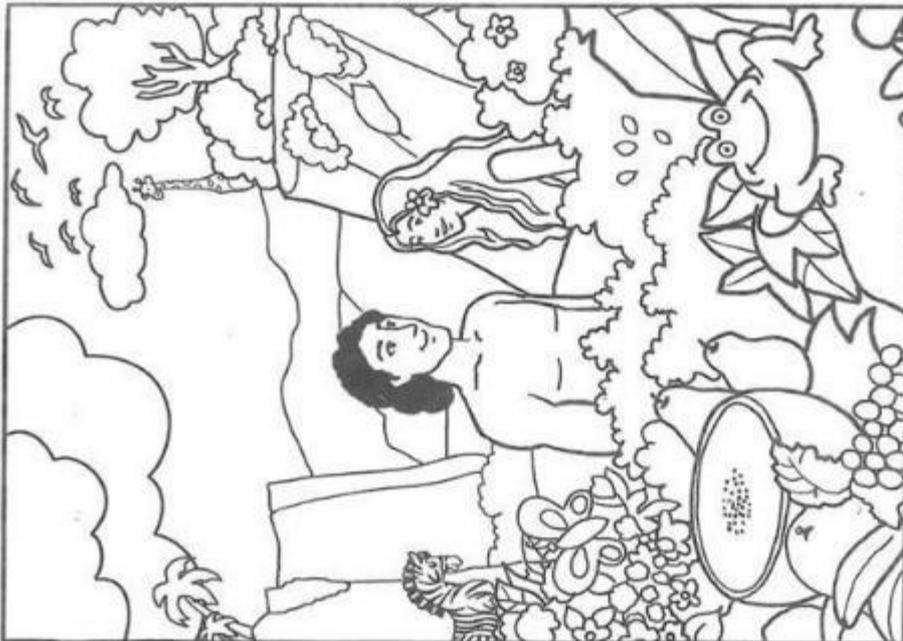
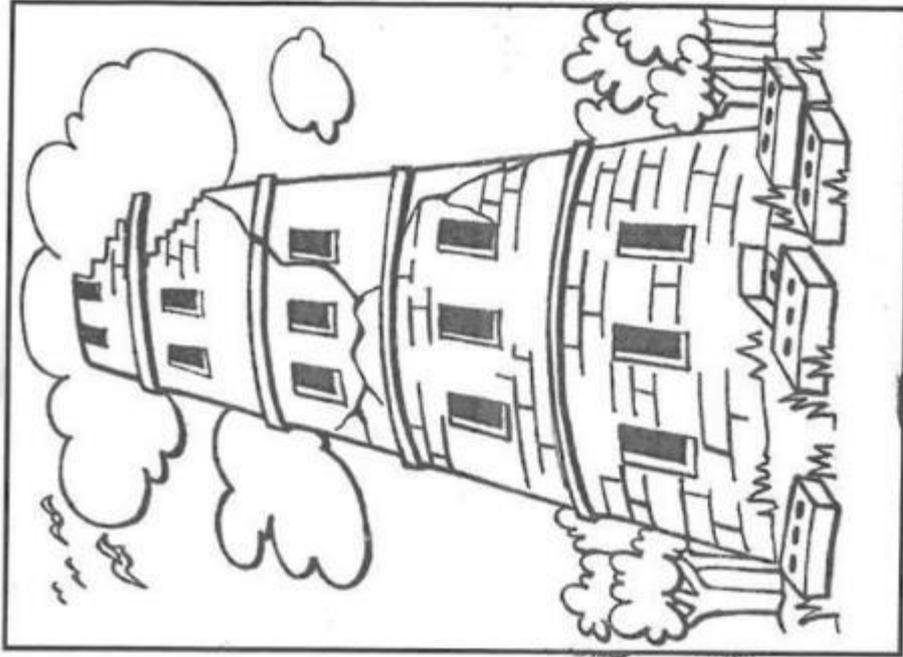
(Gen 37 -50)

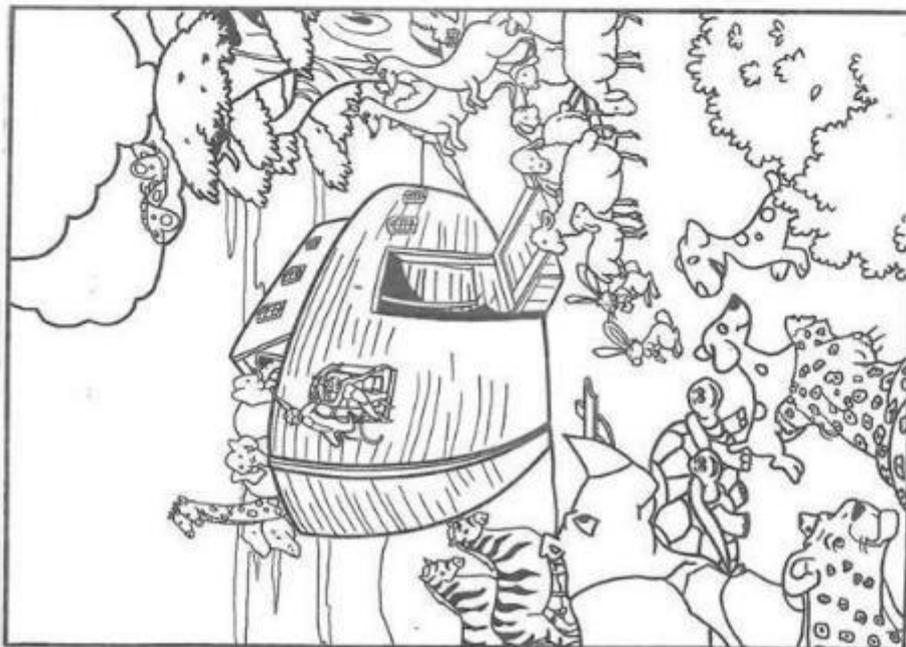
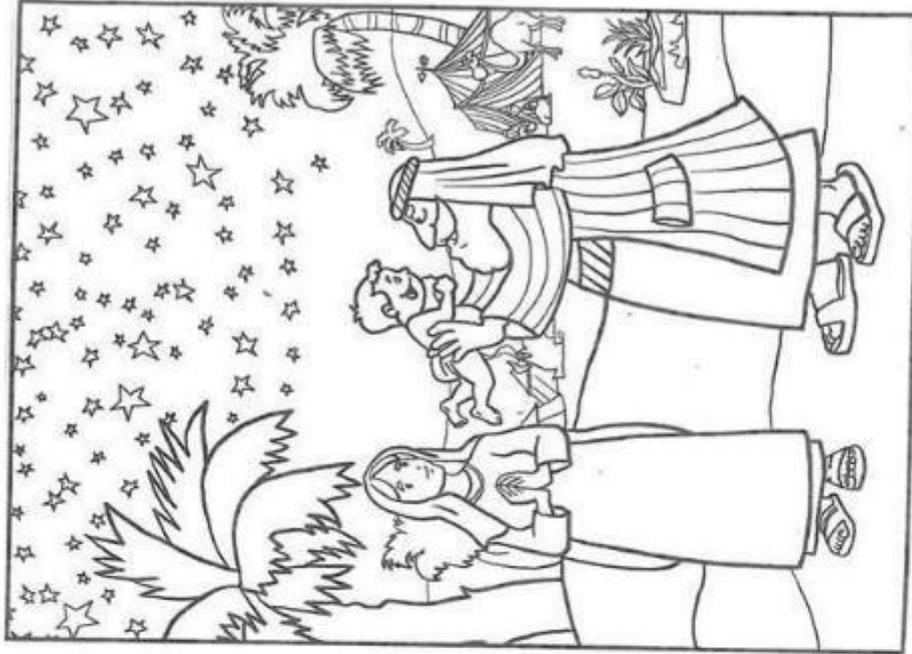
Jacob and his family lived in Canaan. Jacob had 12 sons – try to know the names of all the sons, or at least some of them. Joseph was the second youngest and Benjamin was the youngest. Reuben was the oldest. Joseph told his brothers about his dreams of the sun, moon and stars bowing to him, as well as his brother's bundles of wheat bowing to his bundle. Jacob gave Joseph a special coat of many colours. The other brothers were jealous of this. His brothers did not like this and sold him into slavery.

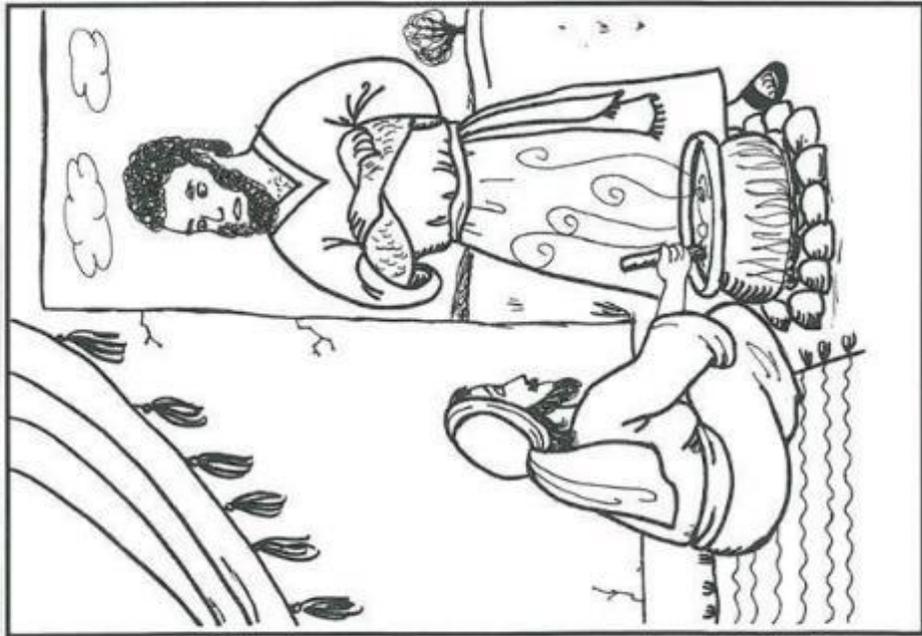
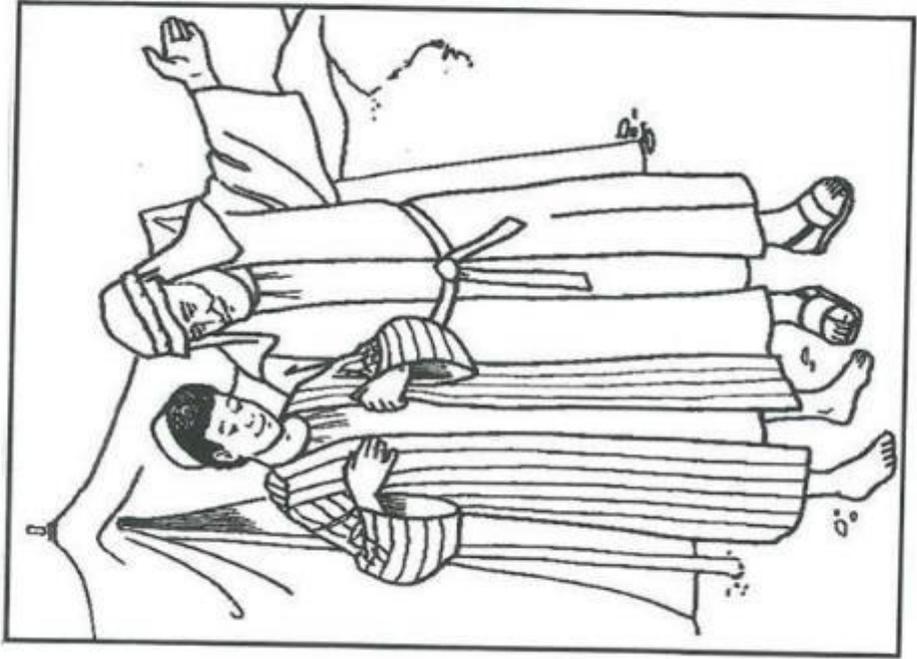
Joseph went as a slave to Egypt. He worked as a slave to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials. He was then thrown into jail after false accusations were made about him by Potiphar's wife. While in prison, Joseph interpreted the dreams of a baker and a butler. When Pharaoh heard of Joseph's dreams, he asked him to interpret one of his dreams which warned of famine. As a result, the Egyptians were able to store food in the 7 good years before the 7 bad years of famine. Joseph was put in charge of Egypt.

Joseph's brothers were also struggling with the famine and so they came to ask Joseph for food – they did not realise it was Joseph they were asking. Joseph gave them food – he forgave them for what they had done to him. Joseph's family all came to live in Egypt.

**My
Mini-book
of
Genesis**









The Land of milk and honey

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Numbers 13-22;33

Theme: Choices – listening to God and making choices especially in scary situations

- **Memory verses:** “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Seek Gods will in all you do, and God will direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5,6
- “The Lord is with us, so do not fear” Numbers 14:9



Information for the teacher:

Throughout their time in the desert, God was with the Israelites - a cloud led them by day and a pillar of fire by night. God provided for all their needs - manna and quail to eat and water to drink. Yet despite continual evidence of God’s love and power, the people complained. Sometimes they even yearned for their days back in Egypt and cried out: “Would God have it that we died in the land of Egypt, or that we died in the Wilderness!” The difficulties and doubts that the Israelites faced were different from the ones we face, but we also struggle and at times we also lose faith in God. Sometimes there are hard lessons that we have to learn. God didn’t abandon the Israelites when they complained and even when they made the golden calf idol and worshipped it. Likewise, God does not abandon us when we complain or are scared or have to make difficult decisions. God loves us and is there for us.

The scene for today’s lesson is on the border of the Promised Land. Moses sends 12 men to investigate the land. The 12 men report back that the land is indeed good, yet the people who live in the land are of great height, and the cities are walled and very large. They are fearful and it is only Joshua and Caleb who recommend that the Israelites take possession of the land. They proclaim, “The Lord is with us, so do not fear.” But the people did not agree and refused to enter and continued to wander in the wilderness.

In this lesson we will concentrate on things that the children might find scary and on the way in which they make decisions. Where is God in these scary situations and in our decision making? We will not look at the story in great detail as the concept of invading and conquering a land and taking it from the existing inhabitants raises questions for us moderns with our understanding of Jesus' inclusive mission to the world. Instead, we will focus on the fact that God is with us no matter how difficult a situation. We can trust God – even when things are hard and we can’t seem to see our way.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn the story of the 12 spies and their fears.
- To gain understanding about what frightens us.
- To encourage the children to be brave when they are scared.
- To affirm that you can do things with God even though you are young.



Attention Grabber:

Would you rather...

This is an interactive game. If you have a large group, it would be easier to have the children stand and have space for them to move. If you have a small group or small space, you could ask them to raise their hands.

What you do:

You give your group a choice of two things.

You say to them 'would you rather eat worms or spiders' those who decide on worms move to one side of the room and those who choose spiders to the other.

You can use the middle of the room if they can't make up their minds.

Here are a few ideas (be as creative or daring as you like!)

Would you rather:

Have smelly feet or bad breath?

Play the flute or piano

Eat hot dogs or pizza for the rest of your life

Win the lotto or have super powers

Be a lion or an elephant



Bible Story: Numbers 13-22;33

In the bible story today, we read about the Israelites who were about to enter the promised land. So, Moses sends twelve men to go and look at the land to find the best areas in which to live. They had to look at the people who were already living in the land and whether they were going to want to fight with the Israelites or if they would be able to take over the land. They needed to bring back proof of what they found. (*almost like bringing home pamphlets with all the information in it*)

So, the twelve men went to look at the land. What they found was a land that was perfect, a place where things grew in abundance. It was everything that God had promised. The twelve men walked around for forty days and then returned to Moses and Aaron.

When the men returned, they told Moses, Aaron and all the people what they had found, that this was a wonderful place to live as they would live well there, however the people who live in the land were very big and their walls were high, and it was probably not a good idea to go and live in this land as they would probably die if they did. And of course this made the people very scared.

However, two of the men Caleb and Joshua who went with the twelve disagreed and believed that the people should go despite the large walls and people that they should trust God and they should not fear the people in the land. The people didn't like what they were saying and were still afraid and wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua. They had to make a difficult choice and they chose not to enter the land. Instead, they wandered in the wilderness for many years.



Discussion questions

1. What makes you scared?
2. What do you do when you're scared?
3. Who do you turn to when you're scared?
4. What do you do to show that you are brave?
5. What have you always wanted to do but are too scared to do it?
6. What is something that you have feared but did it anyway and it ended up being the best thing you ever did?
7. Am I too young to....?



Craft: Bravery badge

What You Need:

- Colour paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Circle tracers (you can use glasses, bowls, lids, or anything else circular you can find)
- 2 cut pieces of ribbon, about 10cm long, 5cm wide depending on the size of the circle
- Glue
- Star stickers or anything else to decorate the badge
- Safety pin



What You Do:

1. Have your group pick a few colours of colour paper that make them feel brave.
2. Trace circle shapes for her badge. Encourage to trace circles of all sizes,
3. Cut out the circles - at least 3 for each badge
4. Once the circles are cut out, it's time to decorate! Use the star stickers and draw lines and shapes with markers in any design.
5. Take a few different-sized circles and layer them, putting one on top of the other, largest circle on the bottom and smallest on the top.
6. Glue the circles in place.
7. Once the glue has dried, write something on their badges to remind them to be brave, such as, "I am Brave," or, "Bravery Power!"
8. Now, glue the ribbon in an "X" across the back of the badge.

OR

Hand print finger prayer.

What you need:

Paint – any colour

Paint brushes or a flat container for the paint so the children can put their hands in it. Otherwise use the paintbrush to civer their hands. It is less messy this way.

Paper

Dark Koki



What you do:

1. Children cover their hands with paint and press them onto a piece of paper so that their hand print is on the paper.
2. When its dry write above each finger the verse from Philippians 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*. You are welcome to use any other verse but make sure you can fit them onto the fingers. Or the children can write things that they want to pray for.



Songs - your choice



Snack: Milk and honey! Perhaps make pancakes before the lesson for children to put honey on. Children also like bread and honey.



Physical activities:

This game is competitive and tiring.

You have one person to be the leader or "Captain" who calls out various actions such as the following:

Man Overboard - Players have to drop to the floor into planking position.

Captain's Coming - Players must stand at attention and salute the 'captain'.

Starboard / Port - Players must run to the designated side of the room. Right or left

Scrub the Deck - Players must squat on the ground and scrub the deck.

Climb the Rigging - Players must stand up and pretend to climb the rigging.

Man the Lifeboats - Three players have to pair up. They must sit in a row with the two on the end holding their hands out to make a boat shape and the person in the middle rows the boat.

Find North - The players have to pair up into groups of three and point in one direction.

Pick and choose the best actions for your group. Or make up your own. The slowest person or group can then be the Captain.



Prayer: Dear gracious God. Thank you for today and thank you for all who love me. Please help me to remember that you are always with me even when I feel scared. Please look after us this next week. We love you. Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To think about making choices and what motivates us. (Is it the easy choice or the more difficult one)
- To examine the consequences of our choices – are there likely to be good or bad consequences?
- To be aware of God in the making of choices.



Attention Grabber:

The meeting of the minds

Ask your group to imagine the following: your parent/guardian wants you to move to a new school. The school you are currently at is far for you to travel to, there are no sports facilities the fields are dusty and have no grass. The library doesn't have a large selection of books, the tuck shop is not well stocked and doesn't provide adequate snack or meals. The classrooms and toilets are falling apart, the teachers don't care about their learners and the principle is never around. However, the teachers let you do what you like in class, you are popular, and you have many friends and you know what to expect.

The school your parent/guardian wants you to go to is an amazing school, it has a great tuck shop, the library is full of books. They offer your favourite sport with great coaches. The teachers use technology in all the pristine classrooms. The uniform looks good as well. They offer your favourite subject, they also provide energade at sporting functions. It is also close to home and every learner is given an iPad. It is one of the top performing schools in the country. However, the principle is strict, the teachers look mean and the school has had problems with bullying. You would have to make new friends and there is a chance you will not be accepted by the children of the school.

What do you do....as a group you must decide whether you go to the new school or not.

(Let the group discuss what the best option for the group is, if you see the group is leaning to one side pose a question that counter balances the argument. Is it better to get a great education at a school that has a good name or is it better to be happy?)

Just like in the scenario where you had to pick the school you were going to go to, the Israelites had to decide to trust their abilities and God to go to the new land. They were scared and didn't know what to expect. They wanted to stay with what they knew even though what they knew was hard and uncomfortable. Sometimes we make the decision not to change because we are scared, because staying where we are is easier than facing the things that scare us.



Bible Story:

Bible story: Numbers 13-22;33

In the bible story today, we read about the Israelites who were about to enter the promised land. So, Moses sends twelve men to go and look at the land to find the best areas in which to live. They had to look at the people who were already living in the land and whether they were going to want to

fight with the Israelites or if they would be able to take over the land. They needed to bring bag proof of what they found. (*almost like bringing home pamphlets with all the information in it*)

So, the twelve men went to look at the land. What they found was a land that was perfect, a place where things grew in abundance it was everything that God had promised. The twelve men walked around for forty days and then returned to Moses and Aaron.

When the men returned they told Moses, Aaron and all the people what they had found, that this was a wonderful place to live as they would live well there, however the people who live in the land were very big and their walls were high, and it was probably not a good idea to go and live in this land as they would probably die if they did.

However, two of the men Caleb and Joshua who went with the twelve disagreed and believed that the people should go despite the large walls and people that they should trust God and they should not fear the people in the land. The people didn't like what they were saying and were still afraid and wanted to stone Caleb and Joshua. They had to make a difficult choice and they chose not to enter the land. Instead, they wandered in the wilderness for many years.



Discussion questions

What are some of the hard decisions you face?
How do you decide what you should do?



Craft: Tinfoil picture

What You'll Need

- Tin foil
- Black paint
- Large paintbrush
- Thin paintbrush or tooth picks

How to Make It

1. Tear off a rectangle of foil.
2. Add a thin layer of black paint to the foil with large brush. Then let it dry completely.
3. Using the bottom end of the thin brush or tooth pick, scratch away the paint to create your design.



An example



Songs:



Physical activities:

Telephone Pictionary

This game is a cross between broken telephone and Pictionary.

It works work well in a whole group setting (depending on how big the group is) or with separate teams.

Divide the group into four even teams and give each team a phrase or random sentence (i.e. "Three men chasing a giant cat." or "Broken pirate ship sinking"). The first person in the group needs to draw this (without revealing the phrase) and the second person needs to then write down what they think the sentence is.

Then they pass what is written on to the next person who then draws what the sentence says and then the next person looks at the drawing and writes a sentence, and so on until each group member has had a turn. The last person of each team will then need to read out their final sentence description and see which team has the closest match to the original phrase. Can be really funny to see how the picture changed!

Materials Needed: paper, pens



Prayer: Dear merciful God. We thank you for all that you do for us. Please be with us this next week and help to trust in you when we are afraid. Please guide us when we make choices and help us if we make mistakes. Please look after our friends and family this week. Thank you God. We love you. Amen.

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With God's help I can! [Joshua]

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: Joshua 1-6

Theme: What separates us from God and what draws us closer to God.

Memory verse: "Be strong and courageous. Follow the law and you will not fail." (Joshua 1: 7-8)
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13).



Information for the teacher:

Many biblical scholars regard the book of Joshua as made up of fragments of stories and legends rather than accurate historical records. It presupposes that Canaan was conquered by the Israelites in a few mighty battles and then divided between the 12 tribes. Other texts show that this was not the case. Biblical scholars have debated two theories regarding the conquest of Canaan.

The first is that the Israelites wandered in the desert for generations and simply slowly moved in and were absorbed by the people already living there. There were conflicts and quarrels and the communities were vulnerable to raids by 'war lords' and pillaging hordes and so leaders known as judges rose and helped to lead and protect the Israelites.

The other theory was that there were many poor people known as *hapiru* who lived in the area. They were oppressed by the city dwellers who were rich, ruled over and exploited them. When the Israelites came, they too were a poor wandering nation and they joined with the *hapiru* to conquer the oppressors. It was a popular uprising of oppressed people against the mighty walled cities and the Israelites were part of this. This theory lends itself to a liberation theology, as struggling communities rise up against injustice and oppression. God is on the side of the poor and oppressed. These theories avoid the difficulty of the way in which the stories recount the brutal invasion, occupation and destruction of communities and the appropriation of their land.

The problem with these theories is that the bible stories as they are recorded do not support these theories. The stories do not describe a peaceful occupation or a liberation struggle. Instead, the Old Testament tradition follows a different agenda where the privilege and prosperity of one's own people is all important and takes precedence over the good of humankind. These texts do not question the patriarchal order where Israelite men had control over women (Ex 21:1-11) and slaves and captives from other nations (Deut 20:10-20 Josh 16:10; 17:13).

This understanding changes in the bible itself. It is not just as we moderns look back and cringe at the brutal accounts. The prophets start to question it and in the New Testament Jesus includes those of other races and Paul celebrates that ALL are one in Christ.

So, using the stories of Joshua and the fall of Jericho we will look at barriers we erect against God (like the walls of Jericho that have to come down) and how we can grow closer to God.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the story of Joshua and the fall of Jericho.
- To identify the walls we put up that separate us from others and God.
- To identify what draws us closer to God and to feel a sense of confidence in God.



Attention Grabber:

Children can line up dominoes in a row, as many as they can, far enough away from each other that they will only just touch if knocked down. You then push over the first domino and watch how it knocks over the others.

If you do not have dominoes, you can use cards or even sticks – or anything that will grab the children’s attention and introduce the story.



Today we are going to learn about a wall that fell down, just like the dominoes have just done. Then we are going to think about the walls that we put up in our lives.



Bible Story: Joshua and the fall of Jericho (Joshua 1- 6)

(See under Older Group for a more detailed story)

Briefly remind the children of what we learnt last week that Moses had sent 12 men to spy out Canaan but after hearing their reports about the strength of the people and how well fortified the cities were, they decided not to try and enter this land. Only 2 of the 12 men, Caleb and Joshua thought that the Israelites should enter this land. But the decision was not to attack and instead the Israelites then wandered around the desert. 40 years later, Joshua led God’s people into Canaan, the land of milk and honey – this is where our story for today begins.

Then summarise the story of how the Israelites walked around the walls of Jericho for 6 days without making any noise. And then on the seventh day they marched 7 times around the city. On the seventh time, the priests blew their trumpets and the people shouted, “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!”

The walls fell down and they entered the city and conquered it.



Questions

1. How did the Israelites make the walls of Jericho fall?
2. What are the things (walls) that separate us from God and one another?
3. I wonder what it means to follow God and be obedient to God?

4. Are there times when you feel that God is not with you?
5. Are there times when you feel that God is definitely with you?



Craft: Make a trumpet / vuvuzela.

The children can each be given a piece of cardboard. They can decorate their cardboard and the words “Shout for Joy” can be added and the children can colour in their piece of cardboard. Roll up the cardboard into a cone shape as shown in the diagram below and use sticky tape to keep the trumpet shape. Use your trumpet to blow away the things that separate you from God.



Physical activities:

- Introduce this game by saying something like: The Israelites broke down the walls of Jericho. But we are going to try and get a ball through this arch without breaking it down.
- Build an arch out of boxes, sticks, or anything else that you have. The children then try to roll a ball through the arch without knocking it down. Jesus showed us a different way of doing things. We try not to break things apart. We try not to hurt others but to see the good in them.

OR

Today is a good opportunity to make a noise, just as the Israelites did that day the walls of Jericho came down. Try to make use of musical instruments, especially drums and shakers. We celebrate that we are all children of God.



Prayer: Gracious God. Help us to live lives are pleasing to you. May we trust and obey you in all that we do. Amen



Snack: Rock cakes or rusks, reminding the children of the rocks making up the walls of Jericho



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the story of Joshua and the fall of Jericho
- To analyse the story in the light of the New Testament.
- To identify the walls we put up that separate us from others and God.
- To start to explore the use of violence – is it ever OK?
- To encourage the children to trust God in all that they do



Attention Grabber:

Children can line up dominoes in a row, as many as they can, far enough away from each other that they will only just touch if knocked down. You then push over the first domino and watch how it knocks over the others. The tell them that today we are going to learn about a wall that fell down, just like the dominoes have just done.



Another option is to build a wall using plastic cups. Children take turns using a bean bag to try to knock down the wall.

OK so that is all about breaking down. How do you think Jesus feels about breaking things down?
(Maybe sometimes things are wrong and need to be destroyed, are there less violent ways of doing this? Have a discussion)



Bible Story: Joshua and the fall of Jericho (Joshua 1- 6)

The Story of Joshua

Finally, after 40 years of travelling through the Wilderness, the Israelites were about to enter the Promised Land. But doing this would not be easy. The land had not been empty all the years they had been in Egypt. The Canaanites lived there. The Israelites regarded them as people who worshipped other gods, who oppressed the poor and who were prone to evil practices. The Canaanites protected themselves with strong armies ready to fight and they had large cities with huge thick walls around them.

Before they got ready to move in, Joshua took some time to pray. God said to him, “Be strong and courageous. Follow the Law that I have set out for you and you will not fail” (Joshua 1:7.8)

The first city the Israelites had to conquer was Jericho. Jericho was a mighty city and it controlled all the land along the Jordan River. Joshua sent two spies ahead to scout out the city of Jericho. The spies went into the city of Jericho and there they met Rahab, who offered them shelter.

Now, the King of Jericho had heard that there were Israelite spies in Jericho and that they had stayed with Rahab, so he called her to him. “Have you seen these men? Have you heard of all that their God has done? He has destroyed whole cities and conquered many people.” He said, “If you see these spies report them to me immediately. We need to get them out of the city.”

Rahab listened politely, then said, “Sir, the men you are talking about came to my house earlier, and then left. They’re far out in the hills by now.”

“Go!” the king said in annoyance, “Tell me if you see them again.”

Rahab returned home, and knowing the king might send soldiers to search her house, she hid the men on the roof among the thatch. “I know the Lord has given this land to you and everyone is afraid of you and your God. We have heard what your God did to the Egyptians and how you walked on dry land. Swear to me that you will show kindness to my family because I have been kind to you.”

The spies said, “When we come to take your city, hang a red rope from this window you let us out of. We will know that all of the people who are in this house are to be saved”

“I will,” Rahab answered, and she lowered them out of the window.

The spies returned and told everything that had happened, “The Lord has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are falling apart in fear because of us.”

Joshua heard all of this and led the Israelites to the Jordan River. The Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Ten Commandments, went before them all. The river was at its highest point and the waters pushed up against the edges of the banks. But as the priests carrying the Ark of the Lord stepped into the Jordan it dried up.

Once they had all crossed the river, Joshua commanded 12 men, one from each tribe to go in and grab the biggest stone they could find. Then they set them up in a pile, and Joshua said, “Look at these rocks behind me. This morning they were covered by water, and no one had seen them for years, if ever. Today, we walked across them on dry land, not mud, dry land. Remember this day and tell it to your children. When you walk by these rocks and your children ask why it is here, you will say, “On that day God stopped the Jordan River and we walked on dry land.”

Jericho lay ahead of them. It was built like a fortress. It had huge double walls around it – making it one of the strongest of the walled cities. The people of Jericho knew the Israelites were coming, so they shut the gates to the city and waited for the battle to begin.

To the Israelites, it seemed there was no way to defeat Jericho. It was a big obstacle! But then God said they should march around the city for six days. And seven priests should carry seven trumpets of rams’ horns before the ark. On the seventh day, at the blow of the trumpets, the people should shout with a great shout and the wall of the city will fall down flat.” These were very unusual battle plans, weren’t they! What do you think Joshua thought when he heard these instructions?

And so, the Israelites marched around the city of Jericho. Imagine the sound of the stomp, stomp, stomp of thousands of marching feet! No one said a word. After they had marched around Jericho one time, the Israelites went back to their camp without a word.

Six days in a row the people marched silently around the city of Jericho –just once. What do you think the people in the city of Jericho were thinking? Everyone in the city must have watched as the Israelites walked around their city walls in silence. They probably kept waiting for the attack to begin.

On the seventh day the procession marched around the city once like they had done the previous six days, but instead of going back to camp, the people kept walking. They marched around a second time, a third time, a fourth time, a fifth time, a sixth time, and a seventh time – then, as they completed the seventh time around, they did something different! The priests blew the trumpets and Joshua said to the people: “Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!”

The people shouted as loudly as they could and the huge, strong walls around the city of Jericho began to crack! Suddenly the big, tall walls of Jericho crumbled and fell down and the army of Israelites marched straight in, just as God had told them to do!

And so, the people of Jericho were destroyed. (Deuteronomy 20:16-18). There was, however, one family that was saved. Which one was it? – Rahab’s family. Rahab and her family went to live with the Israelites.

Encourage the children to listen carefully to the story so that they are able to answer the questions that follow. You can skip these review questions and instead concentrate on the reflection ones.



Review Questions

1. Who had taken over as leader of the Israelite nation? (*Joshua*)
2. Which City were the spies sent to spy on? (*Jericho, which controlled all the land along the Jordan River*)
3. How many spies were sent to spy on Jericho? (*2*)
4. Who offered the spies shelter while they were in Jericho? (*Rahab*)
5. What did the spies do in return for this kindness? (*Rahab was to hang a red rope from her window. She and her family would then be saved when the Israelites attacked the city*)
6. The Ark of Covenant always went ahead of the Israelites. What was the Ark of Covenant? (*The Ark of Covenant was a golden chest which contained the tablets of stone on which the Ten Commandments were written. The Ark was created according to a pattern given to Moses by God when Israel camped at the foot of Mount Sinai. The Ark was carried on two poles by priests and always went ahead of the Israelites. Whenever the Israelites camped, the Ark was placed in a separate room in a sacred tent, called the Tabernacle. The Ark was always carried by the Levites, who belonged to the tribe of Levi. The Levites were set apart by God to perform particular religious duties – this was because they were the only tribe that had not participated in the shameful act of the golden calf.*)
7. Describe how the Israelites caused the walls of Jericho to fall. (*The Israelites marched once around the city of Jericho for 6 days. They made no sound. On the seventh day, they marched 7 times around the city. On the seventh time, the priests blew their trumpets and the people shouted, "Shout, for the Lord has given you the city!"*)
8. In which book of the Bible is the story of Joshua told? (*Joshua - The children can look at the list of books of the Bible which is often found at the beginning of a Bible to help them with this question. You may also want to revise the names of the first few books of the Bible.*)



Questions for reflection

1. What are the things (walls) that separate us from God and one another?
2. What can you do about these things?
3. Do you think Jesus would be part of the march around Jericho?
4. In this story the Israelites destroy the city of Jericho. Is it right for us to use violence?
5. When if ever, is it right to use violence?

Allow the children time to give their own answers and responses to these questions.



Craft:

"With God's help I can" can. Give each child a piece of paper large enough to wrap around a can. Once the children have decorated this piece of paper it can then be wrapped around the can. This craft can be used as a pencil holder. Perhaps provide materials for the children to decorate their cans, as shown in the diagram below. Maybe discuss that with God's help we can be strong but gentle and not use violence!!!





Songs:



Worksheet: See end of lesson for a worksheet. The answers to the questions are:

1. Joshua
2. Priests
3. Jordan
4. Silent
5. Covenant
6. Horns
7. holy



Prayer: Gracious God. Thank you for caring about us. Thank you for knocking down the problem walls in our lives. *(Give the children a chance to think of their own problems and bring them to God silently)*. Help us to be sensitive to others and to think before we use violence. Help us to live lives that are pleasing to you. Amen



Physical activities: Ark of Covenant relay race.

This game reminds the children that the Ark of Covenant, which contained the Law, always went ahead of the Israelites wherever they travelled. The race involves carrying a shoe box on 2 pool noodles / long pieces of wood. The first children run and then pass the noodles / pieces of wood and shoe box to the next children etc.

OR

The children run through an obstacle course without knocking anything over (without using violence / hurting anything).

OR

Try and aim a ball through a number of arches placed in a row (Number of chairs or boxes)

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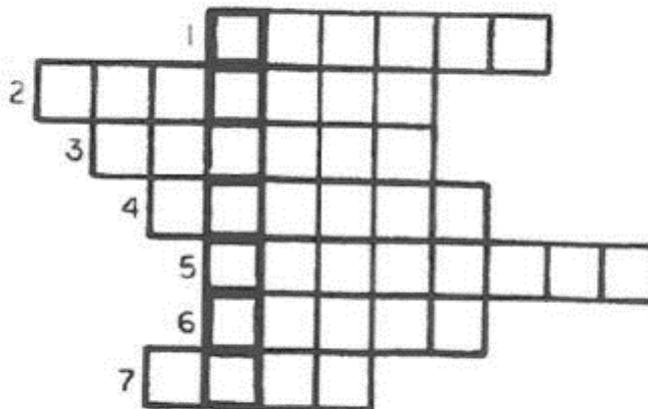
FIND THE NAME OF THE WALLED CITY BY ANSWERING THE QUESTIONS BELOW



Questions

Fill the answers to each of these questions into the blocks below. The letters in the bold blocks spell the name of the walled city that we learn about in the story of Joshua.

1. Who was God's leader in the lesson? (Joshua 1:1) _____
2. These men blew trumpets (Joshua 6:4) _____
3. Name the river Israel crossed to enter the Promised Land. (Joshua 3:1) _____
4. Joshua told the people to do this before they shouted. (Joshua 6:10) _____
5. Ark of the _____ (Joshua 3:6)
6. The trumpets were actually ram's _____ (Joshua 6:4)
7. Type of ground that Joshua stood on by Jericho (Joshua 5:15) _____





Deborah: The Woman God Chose

Nineth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Judges 4 -5

Theme: God raises up prophetic women leaders who are wise and brave.

Memory verses: God's word is a message to obey, not just to listen too. (James 1:22)



Information for the teacher:

The Book of Judges deals with the first couple of centuries after the tribes of Israel entered Canaan under Joshua. The tribes were separated from one another, resulting in each tribe creating their own customs, traditions and religious practices. The Israelites were used to wandering in the desert. Now they were settled in the land and became farmers, which required new skills such as irrigation and building. It tempted them to turn to the fertility religion of the Canaanites and the goddess Ashtart and the god Baal. There was a danger that Yahweh would be assimilated into Baalism. They started to disobey the covenant. The book of Judges presents Israel's history as a recurring cycle of peace and prosperity then disobedience and suffering leading to repentance and restoration to Yahweh. From this it can be seen that the Israelites believed that obedience produces God's blessing, and disobedience punishment. Israel (like some Christians today) had an incorrect theory that one's suffering is caused by sin, and that riches are a reward for faithfulness.

In the book of Judges, Yahweh raised up a number of 'Judges' (13 in total) who led the people. Although they were called 'judges' the title carries no legal authority -except for Deborah and Samuel. The Judges were local, ordinary people who were chosen by God to help with a specific problem or emergency. The judges were 'spirit filled people' who, represented Yahweh and helped the people, and so enabled times of ordered well-being.

It is significant that in a patriarchal society, where independence and decision making belonged to men, Deborah emerged as a judge and the "mother in Israel." In Judges 5 we find the song of Deborah.

Other stories in the book of Judges are those of Ehud, the left-handed freedom fighter, (3:12-30) Abimelech, son of Gideon, who has large political ambitions (9:1-57), Jephthah, notorious for his oath that led to the death of his daughter (11:1-40) and Samson who was known for his strength

Like Deborah we must consider the factors that foster a life of great faith, deep commitment, wisdom and spiritual energy.

Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To realise that God can accomplish great things through anyone who is willing to be led by God.
- To be encouraged to do what we can to serve God
- To be brave and also help others to be brave when they feel they can't do something that they need to do.



Attention Grabber:

Collect pictures from books, magazines and newspapers which depict famous women. Bring these to class and discuss these with the children. Ask them to name women in the church who serve God in many ways. You may need to help them by naming a few of women and saying what they do. Just as there are women who serve God today, there were also women long ago who were well-known and who served God. Ask the children if they know the names of any women in the bible. Let them tell you all they can remember about the person and try to add to what they know. Now, tell them that today we are learning about a woman who did amazing things for God. We can read about her in the book of Judges. Her name was Deborah."



Bible Story: Deborah (Judges 4 +5)

If possible, find a nice shaded tree under which you could tell the story which is found at the end of the lesson. You may want to shorten the story, depending on the age of your children. If you have access to the Internet, follow this link to see a simple video clip on the Deborah lesson.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ETZBMR028.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7ETZBMR028)

Some of the key points in the story are:

Deborah is the fourth and only female judge of Israel and is placed among the outstanding women of history. She had a deeply committed relationship with God. This gave her insight and confidence. She is a prophet, a wife and a judge. Deborah went out to war with the Israelite army, sang her own song to the Lord, and was called "a mother in Israel."

She was a leader, not only in her home (she is introduced as Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth. Judges 4:4) but also as one of God's judges over the people of Israel. Her wise leadership extended beyond her place of judgment - "the palm tree of Deborah" – to the plain of the battlefield where she was shoulder- to - shoulder with Barak, the commander of the army.

She was a person of faith. Although others wavered, including the warrior Barak – Deborah's faith in God's sure victory over the enemy did not falter, even when the odds were greatly against Israel.

She was a poet, inspired by God and full of gratitude, Deborah sang!



Discussion Questions:

1. Which part of the story did you like best?
2. How does Deborah preserve the faith of her community?
3. What qualities of Deborah do you admire?
4. Do you feel repulsed by anything in her story? Why?
5. Sometimes people are afraid to attempt something new, how might you encourage them?
6. If you were to sing a song to God, what words would you put to the song of your heart?



Songs:



Craft:

1. Make a palm tree bookmark. You will need green card, scissors and coloured pencils. The children can draw and cut out a palm tree similar to the one below. On the front of the book mark they can write, “Deborah, a judge of Israel” and on the back, the memory verse. Remind the children why we are drawing a palm tree.



2. Making a Lasso of Truth

Like Wonder Woman, Deborah was one who sought to be a person of truth in all that she said and did. To help us remember this we will make a lasso of truth by plaiting three strands of thread or rope to create a wrist-band.



Prayer:

Dear God, help us always to obey and listen to your word and to be brave to serve you everywhere we go. Amen.

Physical Activity: “Stuck in the mud”

How did the army of Deborah and Barak beat an army of 900 chariots? Some people suggest that there was a storm and the chariots got stuck in mud, hence the reason for this game.

How to play the game:

Choose one player to be ‘it’. All the other players scatter around. The player who is ‘it’ must run around and tag as many people as s/he can. When tagged, the player must freeze and stand with his/her legs and arms apart. The only way to be freed is for a non-tagged player to crawl through the tagged players legs. Players are safe while crawling under legs and cannot be tagged when in that position. The game ends when all players have been tagged and are ‘stuck in the mud’



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To know that God chooses leaders by God’s standards, not ours.
- To encourage us to spend our efforts on what we can do rather than worrying about what we can’t do.
- Be a wise leader; question the behaviours, beliefs, attitudes and roles that people hold as “correct” in our society, but which might be demeaning to some members of the community.
- To challenge stereotypes.



Attention Grabber:

Collect pictures from books, magazines and newspapers which depict famous women. Bring these to class and discuss these with the children. Ask them to name women in the church who serve God in many ways. You may need to help them by naming a few of women, and saying what they do. Just as there are women who serve God today, there were also women long ago who were well-known and who served God. Ask the children if they know the names of any women in the bible. Let them tell you all they can remember about the person and try to add to what they know. Now, tell them that today we are learning about a woman who did amazing things for God. We can read about her in the book of Judges. Her name was Deborah.”



Bible Story: Deborah (Judges: 4 +5)

Begin by telling the children that today’s story begins in the 7th book of the bible, the book of Judges which comes after Joshua.

Volunteers can read Judges 4, using the map at the end of the lesson to find the places mentioned in the story - this is suitable for older and more competent readers.

You may want to include the following key points in your story.

Deborah is the fourth and only female judge of Israel and is placed among the outstanding women of history. She had a deeply committed relationship with God, and the insight and confidence God gave this woman placed her in a unique position in the Old Testament. The book of Judges introduces Deborah as a prophet, a wife and a judge. Deborah went out to war with the Israelite army, sang her own song to the Lord, and was called “a mother in Israel.” Deborah is referred to as “a prophet.” Only a handful of women in the Bible have been called to this lofty position.

She was a leader, not only in her home (When God introduces Deborah, she is introduced as Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth. Judges 4:4) but also as one of God’s judges over the people of Israel. Her wise leadership extended beyond her place of judgment - “the palm tree of Deborah” – to the plain of the battlefield where she was shoulder- to - shoulder with Barak, the commander of the army.

She was a person of faith. Although others wavered- including the warrior Barak – Deborah’s faith in God’s sure victory over the enemy did not falter, even when the odds were greatly against Israel. She was a poet. Inspired by God and speaking from a heart of gratitude, Deborah sang!



Application Questions

1. Which part of the story did you like best?
2. What are some qualities of Deborah that you admire? How do these fit with the qualities of a good leader?
3. Do you feel repulsed by anything in her story? Why?
4. How does Deborah preserve the faith of her community?
5. Does Deborah carry out or reject traditional roles of women?
6. In what ways does Deborah bring about change?
7. Deborah lived in a time when the people’s faith in God was continuously challenged, how might you remain faithful to God when you are challenged?
8. What would God’s advice be to you when you feel like quitting?
9. If you were to sing a song to God, what words would you put to the song of your heart?
10. What links do you find between Deborah’s story and your own story?



Songs:



Craft: Make a palm tree bookmark. You will need green card, scissors and coloured pencils. The children can draw and cut out a palm tree similar to the one below. On the front of the book mark they can write, “Deborah, a judge of Israel” and on the back, the memory verse. Remind the children why we are drawing a palm tree.



2. Making a Lasso of Truth

Like Wonder Woman, Deborah was one who sought to be a person of truth in all that she said and did. To help us remember this we will make a lasso of truth by plaiting three strands of thread or rope to create a wrist-band.

Other activities:

After Deborah’s victory, she sang! In groups the children can compose a short poem about Deborah or create a rap using the words or some of the words of the Song of Deborah in Judges 5: 1-9



Prayer: Dear God, you have taught us through the story of Deborah, to listen to your word and to be obedient to your commandments. May we, like Deborah have confidence in Your Word and know that you can do great things through people who are willing to be led by you. Help us to be bold in faith and stand up for what is right. Amen.

Physical Activity: “Stuck in the mud”

How did the army of Deborah and Barak beat an army of 900 chariots? – The Israelite army had no chariots and not much more than a sword for protection. It was suggested by a famous historian that there had been a storm and the chariots got stuck in mud, and were therefore overcome by the Israelite army. We will therefore play stuck in the mud!

How to play the game:

Choose one player to be ‘it’. All the other players scatter around. The player who is ‘it’ must run around and tag as many people as s/he can. When tagged, the player must freeze and stand with his/her legs and arms apart. The only way to be freed is for a non-tagged player to crawl through the tagged players legs. Players are safe while crawling under legs and cannot be tagged when in that position. The game ends when all players have been tagged and are ‘stuck in the mud’

References:

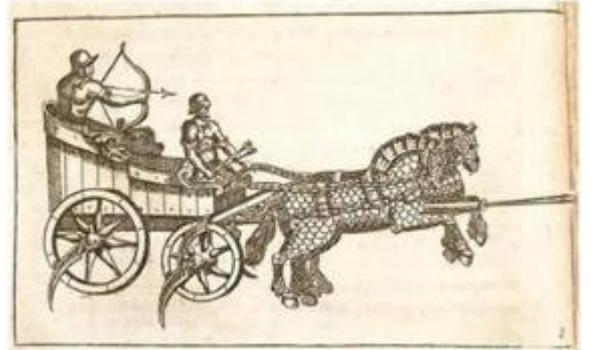
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The Story of Deborah

The Israelites moved into Canaan and after Joshua died they forgot about God and began to worship the false gods of the Canaanites. These were idols, made by the hands of men. Because of their actions, evil came upon the Israelites – their enemies came against them. Yet, whenever the Israelites repented and called on God for help, God would hear their prayers and would prepare a someone to save them from their enemies. These people were called judges. God raised up 12 men and women to be Judges to help the Israelites with their troubles. One of these judges was a woman. She was brave. Her name was Deborah.



During Deborah's time, the people had once again forgotten God and they were very wicked. They found themselves in the hands of evil Jabin, King of Canaan. King Jabin had a powerful army with 900 chariots. The commander of his army was Sisera. The people of Israel lived for 20 years in misery because of King Jabin and his mighty army.

The Israelites cried out to God for help. God heard their cries for help and chose Deborah to rescue God's people. She was not only a judge but also a prophetess. A prophet or prophetess was a person who spoke for God. God would speak to the prophet or prophetess and then they would speak God's words to the people. She used to sit under a palm tree and people would come to her for advice or to settle their disputes.

One day, Deborah sent for a man named Barak. She told him that the Lord wanted him to take 10,000 men to Mount Tabor, which was close to where King Jabin's army was. Barak was scared. He didn't want to go alone so he asked her to go with him. She wasn't afraid of the army and their chariots because God was on their side. So, she agreed to go with him. Barak got his army of 10,000 men ready, along with Deborah at his side, and off they marched to the Mount Tabor. They ran down the mountain and attacked the King's army who were by the river Kishon, and they won, because God was on their side. King Jabin who was very afraid ran away, but one of God's people, another brave woman, who was a friend of the Israelites, killed him.

So the children on Israel were saved because of brave Deborah and also because she obeyed God.

DEBORAH BIBLE WORKSHEET

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

1. "The children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred _____ of iron, and for twenty years he harshly oppressed the children of Israel." JUDGES 4:3
2. "Now _____, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was _____ Israel at that time." JUDGES 4:4
3. "And she would sit under the _____ tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim." JUDGES 4:5
4. "And the children of Israel came up to her for _____." JUDGES 4:5
5. "She sent and called for _____ the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, 'Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, "Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of _____ and Zebulun?" ' " JUDGES 4:6

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD:

6. "And against you I will deploy (SISSY, SISERA), the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand?" JUDGES 4:7

TRUE OR FALSE:

7. Barak said to her, 'If you will go with me, then I will go.' JUDGES 4:8
8. So she said, "I surely will not go with you!" JUDGES 4:9

FILL IN THE BLANK:

9. "So on that day _____ subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel." JUDGES 4:23

UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS FROM THE STORY:

REASIS

OHDEBAR

KABRA

CHATROI

PAML ETRE

CIRCLE THE STATEMENTS THAT ARE TRUE ABOUT DEBORAH:

(Refer to Judges 4 and 5 if you need help)

She would sit under a palm tree

She was a judge of Israel

She was a princess

She was the wife of Lapidoth

She liked to sing

She sent a message to Barak

She settled arguments

She was very old

She baked bread

She was a prophetess

She never married



Gideon, a leader who trusted God

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: Judges 6, 7 and 8:22- 28

Theme: Making decisions. How do we hear God? How do we know that what we are doing is what God wants?

Memory verses: "I will be with you" Judges 6:16



Information for the teacher:

The judges were there to help keep Israel faithful to God and to obey God. Judges were not perfect, they also made mistakes but they did try to listen to God and be obedient. Last week we learnt about Deborah – Israel's fourth judge a remarkable woman of great courage and faith. Today we learn about Gideon – Israel's fifth Judge.

Gideon is called to save the Israelites from the Midianites. After 40 years of peace brought by Deborah's victory over Canaan, the Israelites again "do evil in the sight of the Lord" and are attacked by the Midianites and the Amalekites. The Midianites destroy their crops, leaving the Israelites greatly impoverished and driven to live in dens and caves in the mountains. Into this grim situation, an angel of God delivers a message to Gideon.

Though Gideon is a willing servant of God, he needs assurance that it is God who is calling him. This he does by asking God for a confirming sign as told in the story of the fleece (Judges 6:36-40). Often, we want to know for sure that what we are doing is what God wants. How can we know this? God's word, the bible guides us, the church teaches us, the Holy Spirit directs us, others help us and we have to discern what is right. This lesson will focus on this discernment and decision making.

Gideon learns to trust and depend on God as is evident when, in obedience to God, Gideon reduces his army from 32 000 to just 300 – this against an army that is described as "thick as locusts" with "camels as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore" Judges 7:12. After winning the battle, the people suggest that Gideon rule over them as king, but he refuses and tells them the Lord will rule over them (Judges 8:22-23). Gideon does not seek self-glorification, but rather the glorification of God. Gideon proves himself to be a faithful, mighty warrior and a strong leader. As such he is included in the list of men with great faith in Hebrews 11:32 -34

"So, the children of Israel lived in peace for many years during the life of Gideon."

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To know the story of Gideon
- To think about how we make decisions.
- To feel confident in your life journey because you have faith in God

Attention Grabber

Hide something in a box or in your hand and then ask the children to choose a box or a hand. Then say to the children that they sometimes have to make choices and it is not easy to always know what we should do. We are going to listen to a story about Gideon who wanted to be sure that he was making decisions that were what God wanted.



Bible Story: Gideon and the Midianites (Judges 6, 7 and 8:22-28)

You may need to simplify and tell this story in your own words, according to the needs of your class. Try to encourage as much participation from the children as possible. Bring vuvuzelas or some other instruments or objects that make a lot of noise at the appropriate moment in the story. Try use props to help you tell the story, perhaps have a cloth soaked in water to represent the fleece and toy soldiers to represent the mighty army of the Midianites versus Gideon's tiny army.

Perhaps ask the children if they ever tried to hide from someone. Do you make a noise or do you have to be quiet? Wait for their response then continue. The man in our story today was hiding because he was afraid, very afraid. Here is how the story goes:

A good man named Gideon was working hard. He was hot and tired. He was threshing his wheat so that he could make flour for his family. But his job was extra hard today because he had to do it in a big underground pit. But why was he working in a pit? He was in a pit because he didn't want the men of Midian to find out what he was doing. Everyone was afraid of the men of Midian. They would come by the thousands into their land and take whatever they wanted. And Gideon knew that if they saw him threshing his wheat, they would take it from him, and he wouldn't have anything to feed his family. His heart raced every time he raised his stick and pounded it down on the wheat. He was scared, very scared!

Gideon was hard at work threshing his wheat and trying to be as quiet as he could, when all of a sudden, he heard a voice. It said, "**The Lord is with you, brave and mighty man.**" Gideon almost jumped out of his sandals. He thought he was alone. He looked around and saw something that looked like an angel. He couldn't believe his eyes or his ears! Gideon thought to himself, "Is this really an angel and why would an angel come and talk to me? And why would he say the Lord is with me? Me, a brave and mighty man? He has to be kidding."

Gideon asked the angel. "If God is with me, why has all this stuff happened to me and my family?"

God saved my people from Pharaoh and brought them to the Promised Land, but now he has left us. Why isn't God helping us now? We have to hide out in caves and live like animals. Where is God now?"

The angel said. "God wants you to go and save your people from the mean men of Midian." Gideon was shocked. He replied, "Who, me? Why would God send me? My family is the weakest in all the land and I am the weakest in my whole family." Then the angel said, Yes, you. **God will be with you** and as long as God is with you, you will win against the Midianites". Gideon wasn't so sure about this – he had his doubts.

So Gideon said, "Lord please show me a sign so that I know it is really You talking to me. I shall put a fleece of wool on the floor and if the morning dew falls on the fleece only, and all the earth beside it is dry, I shall know that you wish for me to save Israel." The next morning Gideon rose early and found that he could wring a whole bowlful of water out of the fleece. But still Gideon doubted and said, "Do not be angry with me, Lord, but grant me one more sign. Let the fleece be dry, and upon the ground let there be dew." And the Lord did so that night, for only the fleece was dry and there was dew on the ground.

And so Gideon found an army of men to help him fight the Midianites. How many men do you think he found? 32 000!! But God then said, "You have too many men with you. Everyone will say it is the army and not the Lord who saved you from the Midianites. Send home everyone who is scared."

So Gideon did this – he was now left with 10 000 men. But what do you think God said? God said, "There are still too many men. Take these men down the river to drink water. Separate the men that drink the water like a dog and the ones that get on their knees and drink from their cupped hands." And so Gideon did this - the ones whom God chose were the ones who got on their knees and drank from their hands. Gideon now only had 300 men. He was now ready to fight the Midianites.

There were thousands of Midianite soldiers - so many it was difficult to count them. That night, Gideon and his army went to where the Midian army was and they took with them trumpets and empty clay jars with torches hidden inside. They quietly surrounded the camp and when Gideon started to blow his trumpet the rest followed. (*Allow the children to blow vuvuzelas or make a noise with some other instrument, pots and pans etc.*) They shouted, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

They then smashed their jars – imagine how the Midianites must have felt, suddenly being surrounded by a circle of lights. Again they blew their trumpets and shouted, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

When the Midianites heard and saw all this they started yelling and running around. The Midianites were so confused and scared that and they started to fight each other with their swords. They then tried to run away but were captured by some of Gideon's men.



Review Questions

Begin by asking the children what they thought of the story. You may want to ask the children a few questions to see how much they remember.

1. Who appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat? (*The angel of the Lord.*)
2. Gideon asked God for a sign that it really was God who was asking Gideon to fight the Midianites. What was the sign? (*Gideon put a fleece of wool on the floor. If, in the morning, dew had only fallen on the fleece, and the earth around it was dry, Gideon would know it really was God who was talking to him. The next morning Gideon found that he could wring a whole bowlful of water out of the fleece. Gideon then asked for another sign. He asked that the next morning the fleece needed to be dry, and upon the ground that there be dew. The next morning Gideon found fleece to be dry and dew on the ground. Gideon was now sure that it was God who was talking to him and asking him to fight the Midianites*)



Application Questions / Discussion

- The Israelites kept doing wrong things. Why do you think this was?
- Why do we do wrong things? What are the things that make it difficult for you to do good?
- Who helps you to do what is right?
- Gideon learnt to trust God. He believed God would help him in all that he did. Who do you trust?
- How do you know what is right to do?



Craft ideas:

- Make a jar or a pot, from clay or salt dough to remind the children of how each person in the Israelite army hid a torch in a jar as they attacked the Midianites. Use salt dough if you are not able to use clay. A salt dough recipe as well as ideas for making pots can be found at the end of this lesson.
- Children can decorate a glass jar and label it “The Lord is my light” – ask the children why they think the Israelites did not use glass in their attack of the Midianites? (*There was no glass in those days, and the function of the pot was to hide the torches so that the Midianites did not see them coming*)
- If you have any type of luminous material e.g. paint or cardboard, the shape of a lamp can be made using this material, as shown in the diagram below. This image will then shine when it is dark, reminding the children of the lesson for today. Again, this craft can be given the heading “The Lord is my light”.
- Perhaps each child could be given a glow stick or a sparkler to take home and use that night. This would remind the children of the lesson for today – of the fright that the Midianites must have experienced as Gideon’s army broke their pitchers to reveal their lights.



Songs



Snack: Hot chocolate and a biscuit. Once the children have finished their snack divide the children into 2 groups – those who dipped their biscuit into the hot chocolate and who didn't. Ask the children which part of the story this reminds them of – the way in which Gideon reduced the numbers of his army.



Worksheet: See end of lesson for a worksheet. Ask the children to find as many ram horns, torches and jars as they can – look carefully – there are more than you see at first!



Physical activities:

- Fleece relay race – each team has a sponge and a bucket filled with water. Each team member needs to soak the sponge in the bucket of water, then run to the other side where an empty bucket will be and squeeze the water into that bucket. The first team to fill the bucket on the other side with water is the winner.
- Trust walk – In this lesson we learnt about Gideon trusting God. We are now going to trust our friends to lead us while we are blind folded. Blind fold one of the children – they need to be directed by the rest of the class to an obstacle such as a box, which they need to step over.



Prayer: Dear Lord. We thank you that you are so strong and mighty and that there is nothing that you cannot do. Help us to trust you in all that we do! Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To know the story of Gideon
- To learn to trust and depend on God and what prevents us from doing this.
- To examine how we make choices
- To identify what tempts us to do wrong.
- To feel confident in your life journey because you have trust your own decision making and in God's love.



Attention Grabber: Trust walk. Blind fold one of the children – they need to be directed by the rest of the class to an obstacle such as a box, which they need to step over. In this attention grabber the blind folded child needs to rely on the others to help him / her achieve the goal of this activity. Today we will learn about someone who learnt to depend on God.

Making choices

Hide something in a box or in your hand and then ask the children to choose a box or a hand.

Then say to the children that they sometimes have to make choices and it is not easy to always know what we should do. We are going to listen to a story about Gideon who wanted to be sure that he was making decisions that were what God wanted.



Bible Story: Gideon and the Midianites (Judges 6, 7 and 8:22-28)

See the story from the younger children lesson.



Review Questions

Begin by asking the children what they thought of the story. You may want to ask the children a few questions to see how much they remember.

1. In which book of the Bible is the story of Gideon found? (*Judges*)
2. Who appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat? (*The angel of the Lord.*)
3. Did God choose the strongest man among His people to help save Israel? (*No, He chose Gideon, whose clan was considered the weakest, and Gideon was also considered the least able in his family.*)
4. Gideon asked God for a sign that it really was God who was asking Gideon to fight the Midianites. What was the sign? (*Gideon put a fleece of wool on the floor. If, in the morning, dew had only fallen on the fleece, and the earth around it was dry, Gideon would know it really was God who was talking to him. The next morning Gideon found that he could wring a whole bowlful of water out of the fleece. Gideon then asked for another sign. He asked that the next morning the fleece needed to be dry, and upon the ground that there be dew. The next morning Gideon found fleece to be dry and dew on the ground. Gideon was now sure that it was God who was talking to him and asking him to fight the Midianites*)
5. How did God reduce the Gideon's army? (*Firstly, the men who were scared were to go home. Gideon's army was reduced from 32 000 to 10 000. But the Lord said there were still too many men. Joshua then took the men down to the river to drink water. Those who lapped up water like a dog were sent home. It was only the men who got on their knees and drank from their hands who were chosen for the army.*)
6. How many men were finally left in Gideon's army to fight the battle? (*300 men against 135 000 Midianites!*)
7. How did Gideon's army beat the mighty Midianites? (*Gideon and his army took with them trumpets and empty clay jars with torches hidden inside. They quietly surrounded the camp and when Gideon started to blow his trumpet the rest followed. They then smashed their jars and suddenly the Midianites were surrounded by a circle of lights. The Midianites were so scared and confused that they started to fight each other with their swords.*)
8. Did Gideon become the ruler of the Israelites after this victory? (*No, even though the people asked Gideon to be their ruler, Gideon replied that the Lord would be their ruler. Gideon did not want self-glorification, but rather used this opportunity to glorify the Lord*)



Application Question / Discussion

1. Why do you think Gideon asked God for signs?
 - a. He doubted God
 - b. He doubted himself
 - c. He feared the Midianites
 - d. He just wanted to be sure

(Please note there is no one correct answer! Allow the children to express their opinions)

2. Gideon learnt to trust and totally depend on God. Who do you trust and why? Do you trust God in all that you do? *(It is helpful for the children to first think of a person they trust so that they can identify what it is that makes someone trustworthy. The children may for example say that they trust their parents. We trust someone we know well - someone we know will never harm us and who only wants the best for us – someone we can depend on – who will never let us down. We can be assured that God wants the best for us too. It is however not always easy to trust in God the way in which Gideon did - This is a lifelong journey! We can get to know God more and God's will for our life by reading the Bible, praying and coming to church.)*
3. Gideon was the fifth judge of Israel and is renowned as the greatest. Last week we discussed the meaning of a judge in Biblical times – ask the children if they remember what a judge did in Biblical times. Who was the judge we learnt about last week? How many judges of Israel were there? *(A judge was a person who was sent by God to rescue the Israelites from their oppressors. There were 12 Judges of Israel – last week we learnt about Deborah – the 4th and only women judge. Remind the children that after the death of Joshua, the Israelites began a cycle of sinning and worshipping false idols. They would then suffer as a consequence of their wrong doing – this would involve being oppressed by their enemies. After a period of time, the people would repent; God would hear their cries for help and would then send a deliverer known as a judge, to lead them in doing God's way. The judge would then free them of their enemies and bring peace to the land. The judge would then die and the people would return to their wrong doing.)*
4. How do you make decisions?

Decision making discussion – SEE JUDGE ACT

SEE: we look at all the facts and at our situation and try to analyse it so that we make the best decision and follow the best course of action

Gideon looked at the situation, the fact that they had to hide in caves and that his family was one of the weakest. He analysed what the angel was saying and he was very doubtful that it was a good idea to go and attack the Midianites.

JUDGE: We think about what is right and wrong, what God wants, we can ask the advice of others and wisdom of those older than us. We pray and try to hear what God would have us do.

Then the angel said to Gideon, Yes, you. **God will be with you.**

This seemed to go against common sense – but Gideon listened to the angel who was wiser. He also put out the fleece and this confirmed for him what he should do. Do you think putting out a fleece would work for you? Why or why not?

Sometimes we may not hear God talking to us but we may feel God. We may feel that something is right or wrong – it is a kind of gut feeling. It may be that we are feeling God.

We don't usually have an angel to direct us. We have to really think hard about what is right and wrong and judge it in the light of our Christian principles –especially that of love. This is the new commandment

that Jesus has given us – to love one another. We need to ask whether our actions are loving and going to be kind and helpful or not.

ACT: Once we have made a decision, we act on it in faith, trusting God that it is the right thing to do.

And so, Gideon found an army of men to help him fight the Midianites

Have a discussion with the children about the See Judge Act method of making decisions and think of a situation where a decision has to be made. See if you can apply this method to the situation and come to a decision.

You could use the topic of violence and ask questions such as the following:

- What are the facts about the situation? (SEE)
- If you use violence, will it help in the situation? (Judge)
- Is it right to use violence? Is violence ever justified? (Judge)
- What do you think God would be telling you in the situation? (Judge)



Craft:

- Make a jar or a pot, from clay or salt dough to remind the children of how each person in the Israelite army hid a torch in a pitcher as they attacked the Midianites. Use salt dough if you are not able to use clay. A salt dough recipe as well as ideas for making pots can be found at the end of this lesson
- Children can decorate a glass jar and label it “The Lord is my light and my salvation” – ask the children why they think the Israelites did not use glass in their attack of the Midianites? (*There was no glass in those days, and the function of the pot was to hide the torches so that the Midianites did not see them coming*)
- If you have any type of luminous material e.g. paint or cardboard, the shape of a lamp can be made using this material, as shown in the diagram below. This image will then shine when it is dark, reminding the children of the lesson for today. Again, this craft can be given the heading “The Lord is my light”.
- Perhaps each child could be given a glow stick or a sparkler to take home and use that night. Once again, this would remind the children of the lesson for today – of the fright that the Midianites must have experienced as Gideon’s army broke their pitchers to reveal their lights.



Snack: Hot chocolate and a biscuit. Once the children have finished their snack divide the children into 2 groups – those who dipped their biscuit into the hot chocolate and who didn’t. Ask the children which part of the story this reminds them of – the way in which Gideon reduced the numbers of his army.



Songs



Physical activities: Fleece relay race – each team has a sponge and a bucket filled with water. Each team member needs to soak the sponge in the bucket of water, then run to the other side where an empty bucket will be, and squeeze the water into that bucket. The first team to fill the bucket on the other side with water is the winner.



Balloon meditation

Let the children lie down if you have a carpet and enough space or else sit. Tell them to put their hands on their tummies and as they breath in the feel like they are blowing up a balloon. As they breathe out the balloon goes down. They can do this a few times. Then say that this time as they breath in they can fill their balloon with their worries. Breath in, fill the balloon and then let it float away from you. You could also fill your balloon with a wish and let it float up into the sky. Feel God’s loving kindness filling your balloon as you breath in and calm and peace as you breath out.



Worksheet: See end of lesson for a worksheet. If you look at the picture carefully, you will find little pictures of the words that are to be filled in – the answers to this worksheet can be found on the next page.



Prayer: *Start with an open form of prayer for the children to say their own prayers in response to the lesson for today.*

Gracious God. Today we learn of the Israelites, who despite all that God had done for them, continued to rebel and do evil. And yet, God you are patient, loving and merciful, and heard their cries for help and faithfully delivered them from their oppressors, so that they could once again live in peace. We too live in a society where our behaviour is often as wrong and faithless as that of the Israelites. We thank you, that despite this, you still love and care for us. May we learn to trust and depend on you as Gideon did in our story for today. May we also give you the glory in all that we do.

Amen

References:

www.biblewise.com www.GodsAcres.org
<http://www.daniellesplace.com/html/Bible-Themes-Gideon.html>

Salt dough recipe:

Mix 1 a cup of salt and 1 cup of flour in a bowl.

Stir in 1 cup water, adding it slowly – you may not need all the water as you want the dough to be dry. If it gets sticky add more flour.

You can try adding curry, coffee, poster paints or any other colourant to give the dough a clay look. Knead.

This is a harder dough than the usual play dough which uses 1 cup flour, ½ cup salt, 1 teaspoon cream of tartar, 1 cup water and a little oil. You can use this recipe but the pots will not dry as hard.

Your dough is now ready to make a pot. Some ideas for making pots can be found below. Once you have created your pot or jar, you can leave to air dry - it will take a few days to harden. You can also dry in an oven at a low temperature – it will take about 3 hours to harden. You can even try putting in a microwave for 3 min!

(NB – it is highly recommended that you try this out before your class to see which method is best to use)



Pinch Pot method

- Roll the clay into a ball
- Stick thumbs into the center of the ball, pinching the sides to make a hollow (you're making a bowl shape, not a donut)
- Flatten out the bottom of the ball to make a nice flat surface for the bowl (so it will sit sturdily on a table without risk of it falling)
- Let air dry or bake dry depending on the type of clay you are using.

Coil Pot method

- Make a flat "pancake" of clay. This will be the bottom of your bowl.
- Roll remaining clay into long snakes
- Coil the snakes around the pancake of clay, building up the pot as you go.
- You'll need to squeeze the snakes onto the pancake and onto each other a bit so they stay together when the project dries
- Try to smooth the inside and outside of the jar
- Let your jar air dry or bake at a low temperature. You can even try putting into the microwave for 3 minutes



Gideon's Trumpets



There are trumpets, torches and clay jars hidden in this picture. How many can you find?

Gideon's Army

In the Book of Judges (chapters 6, 7, 8) is the story of Gideon and how he won a battle over the enemies of Israel. Read the story and fill in the blanks below. Then in the big picture find little pictures of the words you have filled in.

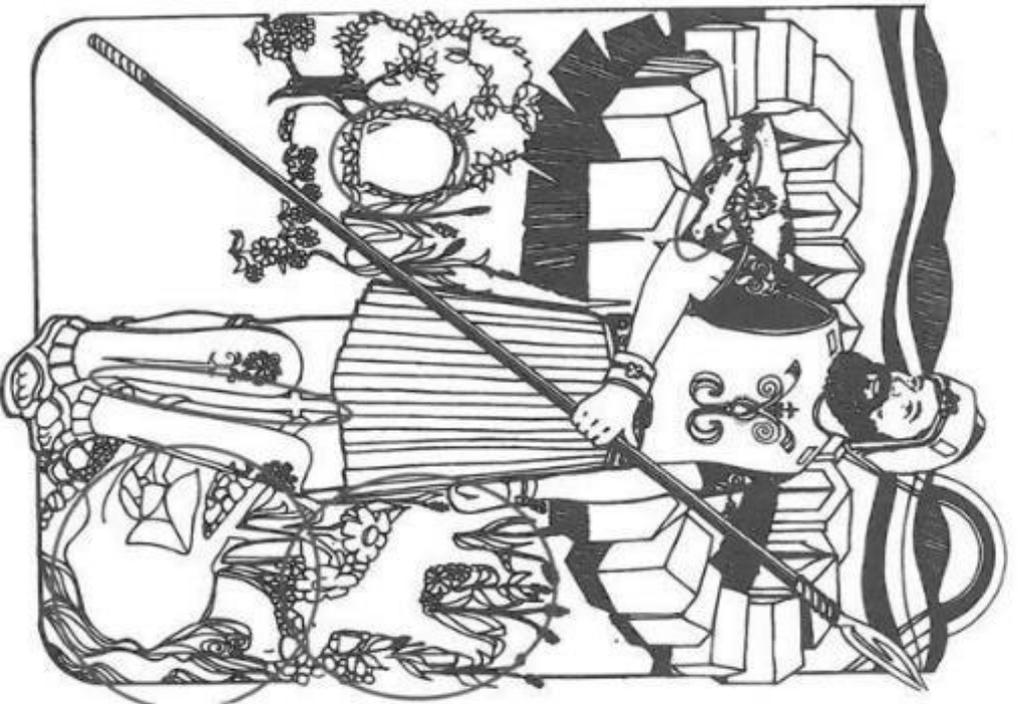
There were so many enemies that they seemed to be like grasshoppers in the valley. They had so many camels that the Israelites couldn't begin to count them. God told Gideon to use only three hundred men to fight that large army. Gideon chose his men by watching how they drank water from the stream. Every man who lapped water like a dog was chosen to be one of Gideon's men. Their weapons were a trumpet, an empty pitcher, and a lamp (torch). All the soldiers were told to shout, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon." God was with Gideon and his men. The Israelites won the battle. (KJV)



What did the angel of the Lord say to Gideon at the winepress? Unscramble the letters below.

EHT DRLO SI HIWT EHTE, UHOT GHYMTI AMN FO URVOLA.

The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour (Judg. 6:12)





Using our strengths: Samson

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: Judges 13 -16

Theme: How do we use our strengths? Is it to achieve God's purpose? Resisting temptation.

Memory verses:

- "The spirit of the Lord came upon him in power" Judges 14:6
- "The Lord is my strength and my shield" Psalm 28:7
- "I can do everything through God, who gives me strength. Psalm 118:14
- Not my might or by power but by my spirit says the Lord.



Information for the teacher:

This story comes at a time when the Israelites had again turned away from God and the Philistines were ruling over them. An angel appeared to the wife of Manoah (we are not told her name) and told her that she was to have a son. The boy was to be a Nazarite - set apart for God from birth. As a Nazarite, he was not to cut his hair, touch a dead body, nor drink any alcohol. He would begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. This boy was named Samson – he became one of the judges of Israel.

Samson accomplished many great things in the mighty strength that was given to him. One story tells of how Samson tore a lion apart with his bare hands. On another occasion he carried away the gates of a city! Samson was known for his strength and feared by the Philistines.

The story of Samson is told from his perspective and Delilah is portrayed as a temptress. We are not told much about Delilah in the Bible and much of our perception of her comes from interpretations of the story. Delilah is a Philistine. She does not fit easily into the traditional roles of women. She is not described as a daughter, wife or mother. She is not married to Samson and there is no explicit mention of any sexual relationship between them. Her actions may have been due to the need for economic security, duress from the Philistines or something else. Whatever the reasons, the Philistines learnt that the secret of Samson's strength lay in his hair. Once his hair was cut, Samson lost his strength. And so, after a number of failed attempts Samson was finally captured by the Philistines - his eyes were gorged out and he was imprisoned. At a feast one day, Samson was brought out for the people to make fun of him. He prayed and asked God to return his strength. Samson's hair had grown and his strength returned and he pushed over the pillars of the temple, and in so doing, killed himself as well as everyone present that day.

This is a complex story and, in this lesson, we introduce the issue of violence. Under what circumstances can violence be used? Is violence never acceptable? In South Africa there is much violence and so it is an important issue to consider. Jesus in the sermon on the mount says "blessed are the peacemakers". Jesus and his teaching contrast with the violence in the story of Samson. And so, we look at Samson in the light of the New Testament.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the story of Samson
- To encourage children to remain strong in their faith.
- To think about our actions and whether using force (hitting etc.) is a Christian response to feelings of anger and frustration and to start to find better ways of responding.



Attention Grabber: Do strength tests. Examples of such tests include:

- Who can do the most push-ups?
- Who can do the most squats?



Bible Story: The Story of Samson (Judges 13- 16)

A summary of the Story of Samson can be found at the end of this lesson. It is a long story. Try to shorten it and make use of a children's Bible with pictures as you tell the story.



Discussion

1. Who gave Samson his strength?
2. What are some of your strengths?
3. Do we have different strengths, maybe we are good at different things?
4. What are you good at?
5. How do you think we should use our strengths and what we are good at?
6. Do you think it is ever OK to hit and hurt others?
7. When do you think it might be OK to hit others?



Prayer: Dear God. Help us to always do as you would like us to do. Help us not to be like Samson who forgot about you and told Delilah his secret. Help us to read our bible, pray and come to church so that we can remain close to you in all that we do. Amen



Craft ideas:

1. Samson's hair - This is fun to make and silly to wear!!!
To make Samson's hair, you need one strip of cardboard to fit each child's head and a piece of black paper. Staple the cardboard strip to fit the child's head. Then cut slits up the black paper leaving about 2.5 cm solid at the top. The more slits you cut the more hair Samson will have! After cutting the slits, staple the black to the cardboard strip –make sure the bent part of the staple is on the outside so that it will not get caught in the kids real hair.



2. Another option for a craft can be found at the end of the lesson.



- The children can play “Put the hair on Samson”. This game is based on the “Put the tail on the donkey”. The picture of Samson at the end of the lesson can be used (or draw your own). Each child gets a chance to be blindfolded and is given some wool – you could even make a “wig”! They need to try to stick the piece of wool (or wig) where they think Samson’s head is. The person who puts the hair closest to where it should be on Samson’s head is the winner.
- Play “Running red rover”. In this game, the kids form two opposing lines and attempt to “break through” the opposing team’s line. At first, two teams are chosen of equal size, and they form two lines, facing each other and holding hands. One side starts by picking a person on the opposing team and saying “Red Rover, Red Rover, send “Jason right over”. Jason then lets go of his teammates and begins a headlong rush for the other line. His goal is to break through the line by overpowering the kid’s hold on each other.

If Jason breaks through, he chooses one person for the opposing team to join his team, and they both go back and join in their line. If he fails to break through, Jason becomes part of the other team. Each team alternates calling people over until one team has all the people and is declared the winner.

- To play this game, you’ll need XXL long-sleeve T-shirts, balloons or small cushions or pairs of socks rolled up, and a Bible. Make lines about 5m apart. Form as many teams as you have oversized shirts, and give each team four inflated balloons / cushions etc. Shout “go,” and the first child from each team puts on a shirt, stuffs the balloons into the sleeves as “muscles,” runs to the other line, and shouts, “My strength comes from God!” while making a funny muscle pose. Then the child runs back to the team, takes off the shirt and balloons, and lets the next person go. After playing you can read Isaiah 40:31.

Or you could play the human knot game where the children have to work together and join their strength together.

All the children stand in a circle close together. They lift up their hands and close their eyes and find another hand to hold. As the teacher make sure that everyone has a hand, help where needed. The idea then is to get back into a circle still holding hands.



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about and analyse the story of Samson.
- To encourage the children to remain strong in their faith.
- To think about our actions and whether using violence is a Christian response to feelings of anger and frustration and to start to find better ways of responding.
- To keep our eyes on God, always seeking God’s guidance



Attention Grabber:

Tell the children a riddle – this is one of the most famous riddles of all time: What walks on 4 legs when it is morning, on 2 legs at noon and on 3 legs in the evening? *(The answer is a human – as an infant, a baby crawls on 4 legs; as an adult he/she walks on 2 legs and when old walks with a stick, hence the 3 legs.)*

Another well-known riddle is what is black and white and “red” all over? *(A newspaper!)*

Give the children some time to tell their own riddles. End by asking what the following riddle is about: “Out of the eater came something to eat; Out of the strong came something sweet” – this riddle can be found in the story about Samson (Judges 14:14) – some of the children may know the answer to this riddle, but if they don’t, ask this question again at the end of the lesson.



Bible Story: The Story of Samson (Judges 13- 16)

A summary of the Story of Samson can be found at the end of this lesson. It is a long story but it reads like a classical Hollywood movie script! It has a hero, a villain, a plot, and a sad conclusion with justice prevailing in the end! To help the children keep their attention during the telling of the story, they can shout out the sentence highlighted in the story i.e. “The Philistines are upon you! Practice this sentence before you begin reading the story. There is also an activity for the children to do towards the end of the story, again to break up the length of the story.

Having listened to the story does anyone think they know the answer to the riddle from the Attention Grabber? *(The riddle refers to the story where Samson killed a lion and then a swarm of bees made their home in the carcass. The carcass was filled with honey. Samson told this riddle to thirty Philistine men. Samson was displaying boastful behaviour when he told this riddle as he was responsible for the death of the lion. (Judges 14: 5 -14)*



Discussion

1. In which book of the Bible do you think the story of Samson can be found? *(Book of Judges – Samson was one of Israel’s last judges. Remind the children of the meaning of a judge in Biblical times – A judge was a leader called by God to obtain justice for the tribes of Israel against their enemies. They drove out the oppressors and brought peace to the land.)*
2. Samson was strong and used his strength to defeat some of the enemies of Israel. What are some of your strengths?
3. Samson also had weaknesses. Name one of his weaknesses. *(Samson was tempted by Delilah to tell her the secret of his strength – this led to the capture of Samson. He also became boastful of his strength and also used his strength for the wrong reasons and for revenge)*
4. While listening to the story of Samson we all wonder how Samson could be so foolish. However, how often do we give into temptation over and over again?

5. It is important that your strength does not become your downfall. Give examples of how this could happen to you. *(You could become boastful and proud; perhaps you would not put as much effort into your talents and so waste your talent; Perhaps you could use your strength in ways that do not glorify God; Perhaps you could be so confident in your strength that you no longer feel the need for God in your life)*
6. Which character do you identify with in the story?
7. How do you use your strengths?
8. Do you think Samson fulfilled God's purpose? *(This can be a start to thinking about violence)*
9. Is it ever right to use violence and to hurt others?
10. Is violence ever justified?
11. Do we need to fight to put a stop to evil?
12. Is stalking someone on social media a form of violence? Or posting horrible comments about them?
13. In South Africa violence is often used to try and get what we need because people say it is only when we use violence that we are heard. Is this justified?
14. Why do you think violence is justified in the Old Testament? Do you think Jesus changed this and taught against the use of violence?

Jesus did not seem to think that violence was a good idea. The only time he used violence was to stop the powerful teachers of the law from exploiting the poor people when he overturned the tables in the temple. But at other times he turned the other cheek and said "Blessed are the peacemakers."



Prayer: Allow for an open time of prayer based on the lesson for today.



Songs – any songs to do with finding strength in God



Physical activities:

- Do strength tests. Examples of such tests include:
Who can do the most push-ups?
Who can do the most squats?
(The children may come up with more tests of their own!)
- Play "running red rover" or the strongman relay. See the younger children's section for rules to this game
- Play the human knot game

References:

www.Kidsandthebible.blogspot.com www.dtlk-bible.com
<http://church-of-god-online.com/ss.FallofSamson.pdf>

The Story of Samson

The Philistines ruled over the Israelites, because the Israelites had done evil again. There was a man called Manoah. He and his wife had no children. An angel of the Lord appeared to his wife and told her that she was to have a son. The boy was to be a Nazarite - set apart for God from birth. As a Nazarite, he was not to cut his hair, touch a dead body, nor drink any alcohol. He would begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. This boy was named Samson.

Samson became one of the Judges of Israel. Samson accomplished many great things in the mighty strength that was given to him. One story tells of a lion which came toward him. Samson was able to tear the lion apart with his bare hands. Sometime later, he came across the lion's carcass. In it was a swarm of bees and some honey, which he scooped out with his hands and ate as he went along.

Another story that tells of his strength is when Samson killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. The Philistines were most certainly scared of this man of great strength. One night, Samson went to the Philistine city of Gaza. "Samson is here!" - the people were told, so they waited for him at the city gate. But Samson took hold of the doors of the gate to their city, tore them loose, and carried them away.

Sometime later he fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistine rulers came to her and asked her to find the secret to his strength. Each one promised to pay her eleven hundred pieces of silver if she could learn of Samson's secret.

So Delilah asked Samson, "Tell me the secret of your strength." Samson began to tease Delilah. He said, "If they bind me with seven thongs that were never dried, then I shall be weak, and be as another man."

Delilah told the Philistine rulers what Samson had told her, and they brought her seven thongs. She bound up Samson while he slept. When Delilah called out, "**The Philistines are upon you**", Samson woke up, breaking the thongs easily. So his secret was not known.

Delilah was upset! Samson had lied to her! She told him, "You have made a fool of me. Tell me how you can be tied." Samson thought he would tease Delilah again. He said, "If anyone binds me with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall be weak, and be as another man." So Delilah obtained new ropes and tied Samson up as tight as she could. Once more she called, "**The Philistines are upon you!**" Samson immediately broke the ropes on his arms, as if they were a thread. So the secret of his strength was still not revealed. Delilah said to Samson, "Again you have made a fool of me, and told me lies. Tell me how you can be tied."

This time Samson came very close to telling Delilah the truth. (He should have been thinking of how careless he was becoming.) Instead he said, "If you weave the 7 braids of my head into the fabric on the loom, I'll become as weak as another man."

Once again, Samson fell asleep. Delilah did as Samson had described. When she was done, Delilah called out as before, "**The Philistines are upon you!**" Samson jumped up, ready to take on the enemy - he pulled up the loom with the fabric.

Delilah was getting desperate. Samson had still dared to lie to her. She pressed Samson more and more, day by day, to tell her the secret of his strength. "How can you say you love me if you won't tell me your secret", she asked.

Finally, Samson broke down and told her the truth about himself – that he had been under the Nazarite vow from his birth, and so his hair had never been cut. If his hair were to be cut, he would lose the great strength God gave him. (Samson surely was not thinking of the consequences of telling Delilah this. Had he forgotten how Delilah had already tested him?)

Delilah called for the Philistine to come one more time. They came, bringing the money they had promised her. When Delilah saw Samson again, she made him feel very comfortable. And once again, it was not long until he was fast asleep, this time with his head on her lap. Samson was sleeping so soundly that he did not hear Delilah call for a man to come and shave off the seven locks of his hair.

When the man had finished shaving Samson’s head, Delilah called out, **“The Philistines are upon you!”** Samson awoke, thinking, “I will go out as at other times before and shake myself free.” He thought he would still be super strong. He did not realise that he had lost his God-given strength.

The Philistines were all around Samson. He could do nothing to save himself. Quickly, they captured him and put out his eyes, making him blind. He was taken down to Gaza, where he was bound up with a brass chain. He was put in the Philistine prison, where he was made to grind their grain. Samson, the mighty warrior, was now a slave.

No doubt, while Samson was in prison, he had time to think of all that had happened to him. He probably thought of how foolish and unwise he had been. He must have regretted how his strong-will and self-confident attitude had taken him away from the special work God had meant for him to do. As Samson spent time in prison, something began to happen. Decode the following sentence:

ljt ibjs tubsufe up hspx

To decode this sentence, each letter is represented by the letter which comes after it in the alphabet. Therefore “A” is represented by “B”, “D” is represented by “E”. “God” would be written as “Hpe” (*The answer is: His hair started to grow*)

Yes, Samson’s hair started to grow again. (Did the Philistines forget what the secret to Samson’s strength had been? Maybe they thought that, as long as he was blind, he could hurt no-one.)

Now, the capture of Samson was something to celebrate, so they declared a special day to offer sacrifices to their God. On that day, many thousands of Philistines came to the celebration which took place in the temple. The people wanted Samson to be brought out so that they could laugh at him and make fun of him. Samson was led out to the crowd by young boy. Samson said to the boy, “Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple so that I may lean against them.”

Samson then prayed to God, “O Lord God, remember me. Please strengthen me just one more time and let me get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes”.

Samson may have felt that he was no longer worthy of life, yet God did honour his prayer and gave him great strength just one more time. Samson took hold of the two middle pillars that supported the huge temple. He then pushed with all his might, and the temple fell upon the ruler and the people who had gathered there that day. Samson killed many more that day than the rest of his life.

Samson had judged Israel for 20 years. Although Samson had made many mistakes in his lifetimes, he had still begun the rescue of Israel from the Philistines.



“Wherever you go, I’ll go” (The story of Ruth)

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: Ruth 1- 4

Theme: Friendship

Memory verse: “Wherever you go, I’ll go; wherever you live, I’ll live. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.” Ruth 1:16



Information for the teacher:

The story of Ruth takes place sometime during the rule of the Judges. These were dark days for Israel, when “everyone did as they saw fit” (Judges 17: 6; 21:25). It is helpful to have some knowledge of the cultural background to the story of Ruth. Women in those times had very little power. Often women were considered as ‘property’. Women couldn’t own land or property which is why Naomi had to sell her husband’s land to the next of kin, Boaz. We could say to safeguard Ruth and Naomi’s future a marriage between Ruth and Boaz was encouraged by Naomi. Ruth would not fulfil her duties as a wife to her dead husband if she didn’t produce an heir with the next of kin/ relative of her husband. Ruth adheres to these cultural norms which is one of the reasons why she went with Naomi.

However, Ruth also loved her mother-in-law, Naomi. Ruth stayed with Naomi even though it meant leaving her homeland. In heartfelt words, Ruth said, “Wherever you go I’ll go; wherever you live, I’ll live. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God” (Ruth 1:16). And so, Ruth travelled with Naomi to Bethlehem. These two women loved and cared for each other even though Naomi was an Israelite and Ruth was a Moabite. The Moabites had different gods and Moab had oppressed Israel during the period of the Judges so friendly relations between these two nations were discouraged.

In Israel, by law farmers had to leave some harvest for the poor and the widowed. These were known as gleanings. Ruth gleaned in Boaz field. Naomi then went on to arrange Ruth’s marriage to Boaz even though she knew it would change her relationship with Ruth as that was going to be best.

The story of Ruth and Naomi is a helpful model for good relationships – their cultures, family backgrounds and ages were very different, and yet they were bound to each other. They shared deep sorrow as well as great affection for each other, and a commitment to the God. And yet as much as they depended on each other, they also gave each other freedom in their commitment to one another - Naomi was willing to let Ruth return to her family, even though a widow with no relatives in those days would be left poverty stricken; Ruth was willing to leave her homeland to go to Israel with Naomi, even though it was a land that was strange and unknown to her. These actions did not go unnoticed by others – it was Boaz who said to Ruth: “I have heard how true you have been to your mother-in-law Naomi – how you left your homeland and came to live with a people you do not know. May the Lord repay you for what you have done!” And Ruth was indeed richly blessed! She became the great-grandmother of David and an ancestor to the line of the Messiah!

Like Ruth and Naomi, our friendships should be ones of strong mutual commitment, respect and trust, where we want what is best for our friends.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the story of Ruth and Naomi
- To explore what it means to be a true and loyal friend



Attention Grabber: Before the lesson set up some footprints leading into your classroom. Explain to the children that you are following someone else's footsteps. When we follow in someone else's footsteps we try to do as they do. Today we are going to learn about two amazing women and how we can follow in their footsteps – we will learn how we can be more like them.



Bible Story: The Story of Ruth (Ruth 1- 4)

The children may get confused if you mention the names of all the people who are part of this story. You may find a children's bible which tells the story in a way that would be more suitable for your age group. Make use of pictures in a children's bible as you tell the story.

You could make puppets/dolls/paper dolls beforehand and show the children the characters of the story this way.

A summary of the story of Ruth can be found at the end of this lesson.



Review Questions:

(Depending on the age of your children, you may want to leave out some of these questions)

1. Can you remember the names of all the people we hear about in this story?
2. Why did Naomi and her husband leave their home?
3. Where was their home?
4. Where did they move to?
5. Naomi's children married 2 girls – what were their names?
6. What very sad thing happened?
7. Naomi then decided to move back to Bethlehem. Who wanted to go with her?
8. What did Ruth say to Naomi when Naomi told Ruth to rather stay with her family and friends? (Ruth said "no" –She said, "Wherever you go, I'll go; Your people will be my people and your God will be my God)
9. So, Ruth went with Naomi to Bethlehem and there Ruth went out into the fields to gather wheat so that both she and Naomi had something to eat. Whose field did she work in?
10. How does this story end?



Discussion:

1. We see from this story that Ruth was a Loyal to Naomi. How was she loyal? (*Ruth "stuck" with Naomi - she went with her to Bethlehem – she didn't allow her to go on her own; Ruth looked after Naomi – she gave her food by sharing the wheat she collected in the fields; Ruth was kind to Naomi)*

2. What does it mean to be loyal?
3. Do you have a special friend? What is a friend? (*Someone who likes you; plays with you; cares for you; is kind to you; makes you happy when you are sad; doesn't make you sad; keeps promises; doesn't say horrible things about you; "sticks" with you.*)
4. Are you a good friend? What makes you a good friend?
5. It's also important to choose friends that don't get you into trouble – Naomi followed God, and as a result, Ruth chose to follow God as well. Should you always follow your friends? Even if they are doing something you know is not right?



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you for our family and friends. Help us to be a good friend by always being caring, kind and unselfish and help us to make friends happy when they are sad. We also thank you for being our friend and for being with us wherever we go. Help us to love one another as you love us. Amen



Physical activities: "Stick to your friends". Each child finds someone to pair up with. Each pair is given a balloon. The pair need to put the balloon between them – neither of the children may touch the balloon with their hands as they race against other teams to the other side of the play area. This game reminds us to "stick" to our friends.

You could also use a cushion.

If you do not have balloons or cushions, then a three-legged race also works well, where the inside leg of the two children are tied together – they are "stuck" together and once again need to get to the other side of the play area. You will need string or something to tie legs together.



Craft:

- The children can draw a picture of themselves with their friend or friends. Ask them to name the children in the picture.

- A **Best friend necklace:**

What you need:

Template of interlocking puzzle pieces (print on cardboard if possible)

Paint,
string

Beads (optional)

Hand Hole Punch

Glue and Toothpicks

Markers or Letter Stickers

Instructions

Paint or colour two puzzle pieces that interlock together. Let dry.

Write "BEST" on one piece and "FRIEND" on the other (or you can use letter stickers).

Decorate using holes punched out of scraps of craft foam. Using a toothpick to dab on glue will make this easier.

Cut two pieces of string to make puzzle pieces into necklaces.

Punch two holes on each puzzle piece.

Tie sting through the hole. Slide on some beads. repeat

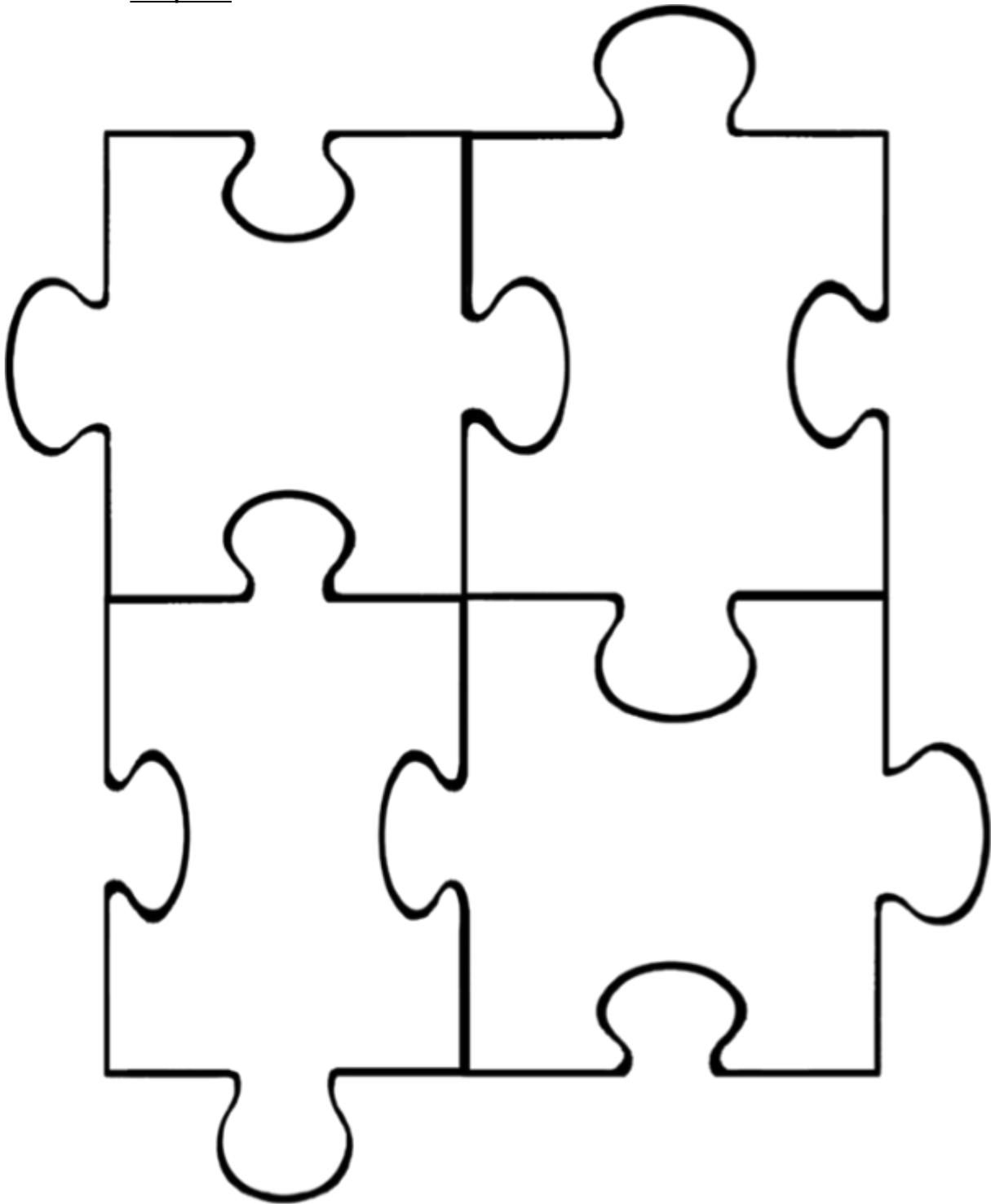
Repeat for second piece.

Give one to your best friend.



The template has 4 pieces so you can give to more friends!

Template:





Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the story of Ruth and Naomi
- To explore and understand more about friendship



Attention Grabber: Before the lesson set up some footprints leading to your classroom. On each of the footprints write one of the words making up the memory verse i.e. “Wherever you go, I’ll go; wherever you live, I’ll live. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.” Once you get to your class, ask the children if they know which story they will be learning about today.



Bible Story: The story of Ruth (Ruth 1-4)

A summary of the story of Ruth can be found at the end of this lesson. You may feel that you need to summarise and simplify the story further. You may also find a children’s bible which tells the story in a way that would be more suitable for your group.



Review Questions:

Do you think Naomi and Ruth were really friends?
Are you friends with your parents and or grandparents?
Is it ok to marry someone from a different culture or race?
Do you have friends from other cultures, other races/ languages or faiths?
What does it mean to be loyal?



Discussion

1. Are you a good friend? How are you a good friend?
2. How do you make friends?
3. What do you value in yourself? *(answers will differ from one child to another, but here are some examples: loyalty – someone you can depend on; someone who is always kind; careful with what they say; doesn’t gossip; caring; honest etc)*



Craft ideas:

1. Make a poster. Give the poster a title such as “Ruth and Naomi”. On the poster, paste footprints and on each footprint, write one of the words of the memory verse. The children can think of words or phrases which describe the friendship between Ruth and Naomi and then write these words on the poster. Examples of such words would be love, help each other, unselfish, want the best for each other, committed to God, caring, loyal.
2. A Ruth and Naomi maze can also be found at the end of this lesson
3. Make a friendship necklace found in the younger group lesson.



Physical activities:

1. "Stick to your friends". Each child finds someone to pair up with. Each pair is given a balloon. The pair need to put the balloon between them – neither of the children may touch the balloon with their hands as they race against other teams to the other side of the play area. This game reminds us to "stick" to our friends.
2. If you do not have balloons, then a three-legged race also works well, where the inside leg of the two children are tied together – they are "stuck" together and once again need to get to the other side of the play area.
3. Stuck in the mud.



Prayer: *Begin this time of prayer with an opportunity for the children to say their own prayers, based on the lesson for today.*

Dear loving God. We thank you for our friends. We thank you for friends who love and encourage us, who bring joy and laughter in the good times and comfort and support through difficulties and disappointments. Grant us the wisdom to seek true friends. Help us to be a good friend to others. God we ask that those people who are lonely and may not have friends will be filled with your comfort and directed to good people. We ask this in your wonderful name. Amen

References:

Life Application Bible: New International Version, Tyndale Publishers and Zondervan Publishers, 1991

www.dtlk-bible.com

George,E.2010. *A Girl After God's Own Heart*. Oregon: Harvest House Publishers.

The story of Ruth (Ruth 1- 4)

In the time of the Judges in Israel, a man named Elimelech was living in the town of Bethlehem. His wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. For some years the crops were poor, and food was scarce and so Elimelech and his family went to live in the land of Moab.

There they stayed ten years, and in that time Elimelech died. His two sons married women of the country of Moab, one named Orpah, the other named Ruth. But the two young men also died in the land of Moab; so Naomi and her two daughters- in-law were all left widows.

Naomi heard that God had given good harvests to Bethlehem, and she rose up to go from Moab back to her home town. The two daughters-in-law loved her, and both wanted to go with her, though the land of Judah was a strange land to them, for they were Moabites.

Naomi said to them: "Go back, my daughters, to your own mothers' homes. May the Lord be kind to you, as you have been kind to your husbands and to me. May each of you find another husband and a happy home." Then Naomi kissed them in farewell, and the three women all wept together.

The two young widows said to her: "You have been a good mother to us, and we will go with you, and live among your people."

"No, no," said Naomi. "You are young, and I am old. Go back and be happy among your own people."

Then Orpah kissed Naomi, and went back to her people; but Ruth would not leave her.

She said: "Do not ask me to leave you, for I never will. Where you go, I will go; where you live, I will live; your people shall be my people; and your God shall be my God. Where you die, I will die, and be buried. Nothing but death itself shall part you and me."

When Naomi saw that Ruth would not change her mind, she stopped trying to persuade her and so the two women went on together. They walked around the Dead Sea, crossed the river Jordan, climbed the mountains of Judah, and came to Bethlehem. Naomi had been absent from Bethlehem for ten years, and her friends were all very glad to see her again.

Now there was living in Bethlehem at that time a very rich man named Boaz. He owned large fields and he was related to the family of Elimelech, Naomi's husband, who had died.

It was the custom in Israel that when the workers reaped the grain, they were not to gather all the stalks, but to leave some for the poor people, who followed after the reapers, and gathered what was left – this was known as gleaning.

When Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem, it was time for the harvest; and Ruth went out into the fields to glean the grain which the reapers had left – it was her good fortune to find a field belonging to Boaz.

It so happened that while she was gleaning in the field, Boaz came out to see his men reaping, and he said to them, "The Lord be with you"; and they answered him, "The Lord bless you."

And Boaz said to his master of the reapers: "Who is this young woman that I see gleaning in the field?"

The man answered: "It is the young woman from the land of Moab, who came with Naomi. She has been gathering grain since yesterday."

Then Boaz said to Ruth: "Listen to me, my daughter. Do not go to any other field – stay here with me. I will take care of you."

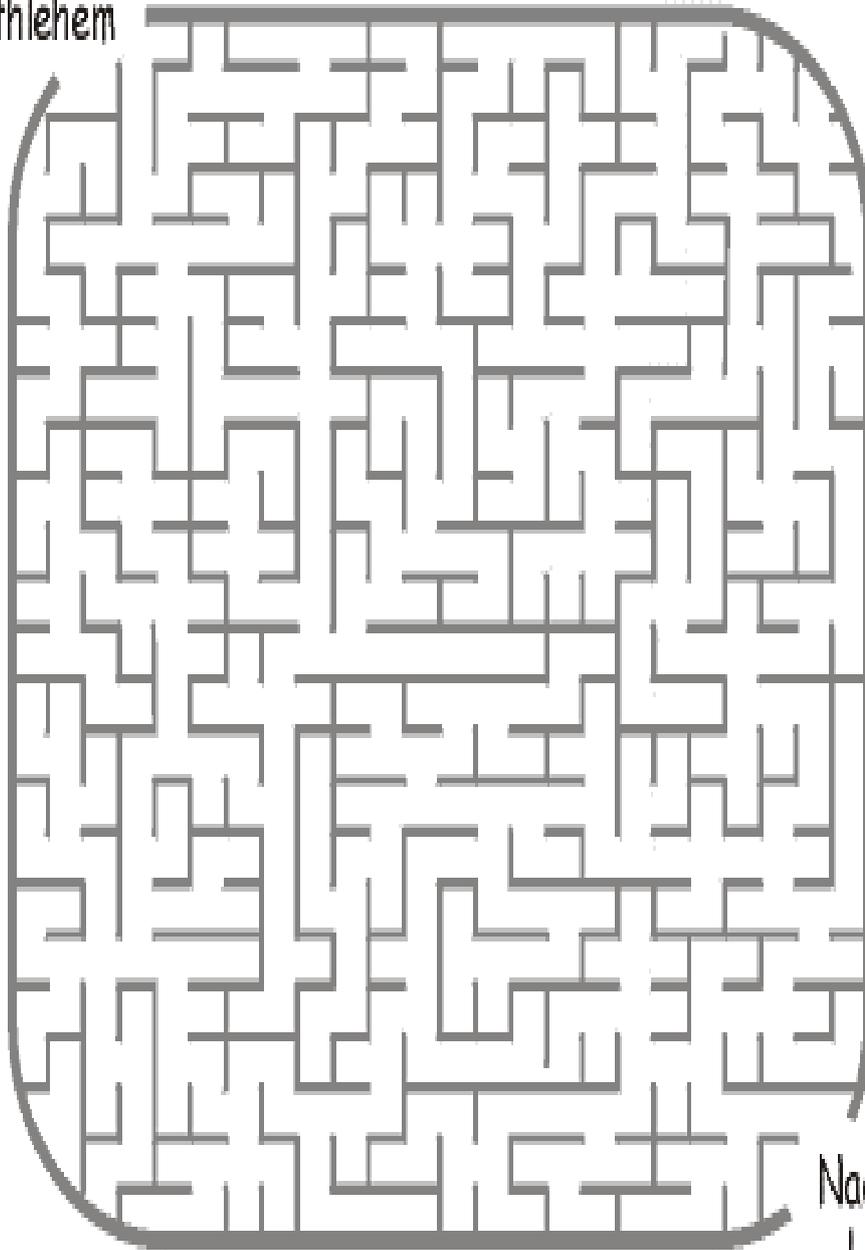
Then Ruth bowed to Boaz, and thanked him for his kindness, all the more kind because she was a stranger in Israel. Boaz said: "I have heard how true you have been to your mother-in-law Naomi – how you left your homeland and came to live with a people you do not know. May the Lord repay you for what you have done!"

That evening, Ruth showed Naomi how much she had gleaned, and told her of the rich man Boaz, who had been so kind to her. And Naomi said: "This man is a near relation of ours. Stay in his fields, as long as the harvest lasts." And so Ruth did this, and soon after this, it so happened that Boaz took Ruth as his wife.

And so Naomi and Ruth went to live in his home. And Boaz and Ruth had a son, whom they named Obed; and later Obed had a son named Jesse; and Jesse was the father of David, the shepherd boy who became king. And many, many, many, many years later, Jesus was born as a descendent of David. And so Ruth, the young woman of Moab, who chose the people and the God of Israel, became the mother of kings!

Ruth and Naomi maze

Bethlehem



Naomi and Ruth
Leave Moab



Building friendship with God: Hannah and Samuel

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: 1 Sam 1-3

Theme: Conversations with God which build friendship with God and understanding ourselves better

Memory verse: "Speak! Your servant is listening." (1 Sam 3:10)



Information for the teacher:

Our lesson today is about Hannah and Samuel. Hannah is a devout woman but she is childless. In those times in Israel, it was the duty of a woman to have children and especially sons. Women who were childless were looked at with pity. And so, Hannah prays desperately to God for a boy child. She promises to dedicate her child to the temple, to God's service

Hannah was so happy when Samuel was born that she consecrated him to God and vowed that his hair would not be cut. This was not an unusual custom as we have already learnt that Samson, another of Israel's judges, was also consecrated to God and as a sign of this did not cut his hair. Samuel becomes a priest. He was first and foremost a Prophet of God – that is a messenger from God, but is also often described as "Israel's last and greatest judge."

In today's lesson, we focus on prayer. We reflect on Hannah's fervent prayer to God for a child, and her faith and trust in God as she waited patiently for her prayer to be answered. Did God answer? Hannah believed God did. But often it seems as if some prayers are answered and others not. God is not a genie in the sky or Father Christmas. As we teach our children about prayer, we need to remember this. While doing this lesson with a group of children one child asked, "Why did God not make my Granny better?" What answer could the teacher give. "You did not pray well enough? You did not have enough faith? Or God heard your prayer but your Granny was sick and so she died. Sad things happen to us, but as we pray, we draw closer to God, we are more able to feel God's love for us and presence with us, despite what happens.

In Hannah's story we are told that God hears and responds to prayer. Hannah gives thanks in song, an Israelite hymn, similar to some of the poems in the book of Psalms. Mary, the mother of Jesus, modelled her own praise song, called the Magnificat, after Hannah's prayer.

In Samuel's story, that we tell today, God speaks to Samuel through that still soft voice and Samuel responds to God. The message that Samuel receives from God is the first he received as a prophet. Hannah and Samuel's story demonstrate a number of aspects of prayer: listening to God, bringing our concerns and desires before God, being still to hear and feel God's guidance. These all form part of our conversations with God and deepen our relationship with God. Consequently, our lesson focus is on prayer and building friendship with God.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To teach children the stories of Hannah and Samuel
- To teach that prayer is about talking to and listening to God.
- To know that God hears us and that we form a relationship with God through prayer.
- To encourage the children to pray and be thankful for being in relationship with God.



Attention Grabber: Are you a good listener?

Play broken telephone or any other listening game the kids might like, such as the children close their eyes or turn away from you. They then need to listen carefully to the sounds you make and try to identify them. Sounds could include a whistle, cutting / tearing paper, pouring water etc.

Another idea is to have a box with an image of an ear; an image of a mouth or lips and a picture of praying hands. Ask the children to say what each item represents and to guess what the lesson is about.



Bible Story: The story of Hannah and Samuel (1 Sam 1-3)

You may want to take the children outside. First, have them sit quietly and listen to the different sounds around them for about 30 seconds to 1 minute, and see if they can identify the sounds. Then tell them that today's story is about a boy called Samuel who had to listen very carefully to what God was saying to him.

There was once a woman named Hannah. She was married but she had no children which made her sad. She really wanted a little baby. She used to go to the temple often where Eli was the Priest, and in tears, prayed to God to give her a son. She never stopped praying and promised God that if she had a little boy, she would give him back to God. As a sign of her love for God, she promised that the boy's hair would never be cut.

(Ask the children if they can remember which other bible character did not cut his hair – Samson.)

One day, a wonderful thing happened! Hannah became pregnant and had a son whom she called Samuel, which means, "asked of God". *(How do you think Hannah felt now? Do you think she was still sad?)*

When Samuel was about 2 years old, Hannah kept her promise to God and took little Samuel to live in the Temple with Eli, the Priest. This is where he served God. Hannah then gave a prayer of thanks to God, which went like this: *"My heart rejoices in the Lord. Oh how the Lord has blessed me..."*

One night, when Samuel and Eli went to bed, Samuel heard someone calling him, "Samuel, Samuel". He thought it was Eli, so he went to him and said, "You called me and here I am." "I did not call you, go back to bed" said Eli. So, Samuel went back to bed. Again, Samuel heard a voice Calling him. Again, he got up and went to Eli and said "You called and here I am." And again, Elis said, "I didn't call, go back to bed". This happened three times and on the third time, Eli realised that it was God calling Samuel so he told him "Go back to bed and if you hear the voice again say, "Speak! Your

servant is listening". And so later that night when Samuel heard someone calling, "Samuel, Samuel", he said..... (*Encourage the children to respond, "Speak, your servant is listening."*)

Now that Samuel was listening, God was able to give him a message. The message was that God was not happy with Eli's two sons as they were breaking God's rules. God had already told this to Eli as well. There would be bad consequences for Eli and his sons because they did not obey God and so brought about evil things. When Samuel told Eli this, Eli was very sad because he knew it was true.

And so, Samuel deepened his relationship with God. He became God's messenger and as he grew up he did many more great things for God.



Review Questions

1. What was Samuel's mother's name? (*Hannah*)
2. What did Hannah want? (*A son*)
3. Who did she ask for a son? (*God*)
4. What did she name her son? (*Samuel*)
5. What did Hannah promise God, if she had a son? (*She promised to give him to God and have him raised in the Temple*)
6. Did Hannah do what she promised? (*Yes*)
7. What else did she do when she got the baby? (*Thanked God and sang a song of praise*)
8. Who called Samuel when he went to bed? (*God*)
9. How many times did God call Samuel? (*Three times*)
10. What did Eli tell Samuel to say? (*Speak! Your servant is listening.*)
11. In this story, God spoke to Samuel. Can you think of some other stories in the Bible where God speaks to people? (*God spoke to Moses from a burning bush; God spoke to Gideon through an angel etc*)



Discussion:

1. What does relationship / friendship with God look/ feel like? (*Each relationship can be different. Aware of God, spend time quietly with God etc.*)
2. What do you understand by prayer? Do you think God still speaks to us? (*Yes! God speaks to us when we read our bibles – we learn from the Bible what God wants us to do; God speaks to us through others, through nature, through things that happen to us, through our loved ones. Praying is like a conversation with God. It is important that we listen to God to try to hear what God is saying to us.*)
3. Are all prayers answered? (*Yes and no. We do not always get what we want (see next question) but God is with us and we can speak to God by being still with God and by praying and telling God how we feel.*)
4. Is God like a genie in the sky / Father Christmas? (*No God is not there to give us things. God helps us to grow and become who we truly are. Talk about this?*)
5. Hannah did not forget to say thanks to God for the baby. We should also thank God for everything we have and that our prayers build a closer relationship with God. What can we give thanks for? (*We can be very thankful to God for all the good things we have and experience*)



Craft ideas:

1. The Power of Prayer: Sweets Experiment!

This experiment with skittles (sweets) is colourful, easy and makes a great statement about what we are asking God to do when we pray. Prayers are a way of joining with God and asking God to have an effect on the world and situations around us. We pray because we believe that our prayers, through God's power, will make a difference to the world. In this activity, colour is released from the sweets into the surrounding water, creating a colourful picture, symbolic of how our prayers to God are a way of us joining with God and experiencing God's love.

You will need: A bag of coloured sweets, a plate, hot water (not hot enough to scald, but hot enough to make the colour run!)



Arrange the sweets in the plate.

Pour some hot water onto the plate to cover its surface. Pour it carefully so that the sweets stay in place. Wait and the sweets will gradually release their colour



Try an alternative...

Cover the surface of the plate with water and ask children to pick up a skittle, pray for a person or situation and place the skittle on the plate.

2. Make a "telephone". Each child can be given 2 paper or plastic cups (little yoghurt containers also work) and some string. Make a hole on the bottom of each cup – the hole should be ONLY large enough to put the string through – no larger! Pull the string through the hole in both cups and knot it on the inside – you may need to thread the string through with a needle. Pull the string tight so that the knots rest on the bottom of both cups. Each child can find a partner. The one child then places the open end of the cup over his/her ear, while his/her partner speaks into the other cup, making sure the string is as tight as possible. If they have made the telephone correctly, the children should be able to hear their partner speak, even from another room!



Remind the children that when we pray to God, it is as though we are speaking to a friend on a phone – we can speak to God, but we must also try to listen to what God is saying to us too!



Songs: Choose songs you like and if possible, that fit with the theme of prayer and listening to God.



Physical activities

The name game – the children stand in a circle. A child throws a ball to another child, calling the name of the other child as he / she throws the ball. Remind the children of the story we learnt about today where God called Samuel.

Refer to the attention grabber for more ideas.



Prayer:

Get the children to sit quietly, perhaps around a candle. You could say something like: "Be still. Relax your head and neck, relax your arms and hands. Be still and take a deep breath in. Feel the air coming into your body. Breath out. Be aware of your breathing. Breath in the goodness of God and breathe out anything that is making you sad or that you don't like. It is good to spend some time being quiet when praying to God, not just talking all the time.

You may also want to show the children different prayer positions such as kneeling, sitting, standing with arms out stretched or lying down. They can look up rather than looking down and closing their eyes. Some of the children may like to use one of these positions as you say the following prayer:

Dear God. Thank you for being here with us. We thank you that you hear us when we pray. Help us to listen to what you are saying to us too. Amen.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To teach the children the stories of Hannah and Samuel.
- To encourage children to have conversations with God, not only speaking to God but learning to listen to God and growing their relationship with God.
- To think about the nature of prayer and that God is not simply a genie in the shy who gives us what we want.
- To encourage them to be aware of God working in their lives and to give thanks to God.



Attention Grabber: A balloon game

Materials required: a few balloons - one of which must be a different colour to others; a blindfold.

The children will form a circle around the balloons. One child within the group is to be the boss and one child, the servant. The servant needs to be blindfolded and then needs to get the balloon which is a different colour to the others for his/her boss. The boss will give instructions to the servant to help him/her find the balloon, while the other children in the circle say things to distract the servant.

Ask the children how they think their relationship with God is similar to this game.

Sometimes we need to block out all the noises and distractions of this world in order to hear God's voice. God may be speaking to us and we need to be listening. Today's lesson is about this!



Bible Story: The story of Hannah and Samuel (1 Sam 1-3)

Our story for today is found in the 1st book of Samuel. A summary of this story can be found in the lesson for the younger children, but do please read the story from the Bible for a more detailed understanding.

The children may also enjoy acting out the following skit, although you will first need to tell the story of Hannah, as the skit only tells the story of God calling Samuel.

SKIT – A message from God

Cast: Eli, Samuel, God

Act 1 -Night time, in the Tabernacle. **Props:** 2 mats or blankets

Eli: Go to bed, Samuel.

Samuel: Eli, it is great to be able to live here in God's house and learn all about the great things God did in the past. But I wonder why we don't hear much from God these days!

Eli: Ok, Samuel. Enough of the chat. Go to bed.

Samuel: Good night!

(They go to bed i.e. lie on the mats)

God: Samuel!!

(Samuel gets up and goes over to Eli).

Samuel: Eli, what is it? I heard you call me.

Eli: I didn't say anything. Go back to bed.

(Samuel returns to bed).

God: Samuel!!

(Samuel goes to Eli again).

Samuel: Eli, I heard you this time? What is it? Do you want a drink of water?

Eli: I don't know what your problem is, Samuel. Go back to bed. You've got a big day tomorrow.

(They go back to bed).

God: Samuel!!

(Samuel goes to Eli again).

Samuel: Eli, what is it? Just tell me and I will get it for you.

Eli: Now, I understand what is going on. You, go back to bed and if you hear the voice again say, "Speak! Lord, for your servant is listening"

(They go back to bed).

God: Samuel! Samuel!

Eli: Speak God, your servant is listening.

Act 2 -The next morning, in the Tabernacle

Eli: Samuel, what did God say to you last night?

Samuel: Maybe I'd rather not say.

Eli: You'd better tell me. Don't hide anything from me!

Samuel: Eli, God said that He was angry at your family. Your two sons have been doing terrible things. You knew that they were doing bad things, but you didn't stop them. God said that the sins they have committed are going to have consequences that not even a sacrifice can change. They will be punished.

Eli: I would have to ask. Anyway, God is God. God will do whatever God decides.

Explain to the children that this was a turning point in Samuel's life as he had become one of God's prophets i.e. a messenger



Review Questions

1. How did Hannah speak to God? *(By praying.)*
2. How did she respond when she had a child? *(Thanked and praised God in song. Gave Samuel back to God.)*
3. Did Samuel realise that God was calling him? *(Not at first – God had to call Samuel 3 times. Samuel at first thought it was Eli who was calling him.)*
4. Did Samuel listen to God? *(Yes, he said, "Speak, your servant is listening.")*
5. What message did the Lord give Samuel? *(That there were consequences for Eli and his family because of what Eli's sons had done wrong.)*
6. In this story, God spoke to Samuel. Can you think of some other stories in the Bible where God speaks to people? *(God spoke to Moses from a burning bush; God spoke to Gideon through an angel etc)*



Discussion:

1. *What do we learn from Hannah and Samuel about our conversations with God/speaking to God? Give the children a chance to share their views.*
2. *Do you think God still speaks to us? How? (Through prayer, reading the Bible, coming to church. Sometimes God also speaks to us through other people. Sometimes we get a "feeling" to do something good – that feeling may be God calling you to do something.)*
3. *How do you find God?*
4. *How would you speak to God through emojis? If you were to send God an emoji, what would it be?*

5. Are all prayers answered? *(Yes and no. We do not always get what we want (see next question) but God is with us and we can speak to God by being still with God and by praying and telling God how we feel. Ask a volunteer to look up 1Thess 5: 16-18 and read it to the group. Note that God we always pray because it keeps us in relationship with God and God always hears our prayers although we may not get what we want.)*
6. Is God like a genie in the sky / Father Christmas? *(No God is not there to give us things. God helps us to grow and become who we truly are. Talk about this?)*



Below are a number of ideas for prayer. Choose whichever suits you and your group.

1. Start with a time of silence, getting the children to be still and listen. You may have them sit around a lit candle. Children take turns praying silently or listening to each other's prayers.
2. We have learnt during our lesson today that prayer is a two-way communication – during prayer we speak to God, but it is also important to listen for what God may be saying to us. During the prayer time today, spend time in quietness, listening to God. The children may like to find a place of their own somewhere in the church grounds where they spend 5 minutes in complete silence, listening to God.

Once they return from their time of silence, ask them how they found the experience. Did they hear God? - Perhaps they heard God in the wind or perhaps they saw God in the flowers? Perhaps a thought came into their minds during this time to do something specific for someone. Perhaps during this time, they felt a strong sense of peace. Some of the children may feel that God didn't speak to them at all during this time of silence, and that's also fine! What is important is that we all spend time being quiet with God, reading the bible and praying. If you do not set aside time to be quiet with the Lord, you will not be able to hear God's voice.

The following prayer, said slowly, and with a time of silence between each verse, may be a good way to end this prayer session:

"Be still and know that I am God"

"Be still and know that I am"

"Be still and know"

"Be still"

"Be"

The "Letter from Jesus" which can be found at the end of this lesson, can also be given to each child.



Crafts:

1. **Make a Prayer Box.** Children write their prayers on thick coloured card. The children may decorate the cards in whatever way they wish and write their name and age if they would like to. Cover and decorate a cardboard box to hold the cards. Give the box of prayers to your minister or priest to use in family services or you may keep them in your class to pray each week. You can add to this list continuously.

2. **Draw a hand:** The children will draw an outline of one of their hands and write a prayer or something they think God is telling them.
3. Write a **letter to God** or a letter from God, similar to the letter found at the end of this lesson. In your letter, discuss where you see God e.g. What does something such as a bird tell you about God? Include emojis!
4. Do the skittles / sweets illustration as for the younger children.



Physical Activities:

1. The listening game - The children close their eyes or turn away from you. They then need to listen carefully to the sounds that you make and try to identify them. Sounds could include a whistle, cutting/tearing paper, stapler, pouring water etc.
2. The name game – The children stand in a circle. One person stands in the centre of the circle holding a ball. This person calls out the name of one of the children in the group, throws the ball straight up into the air and as high as possible. The person whose name was called needs to try to catch the ball. If this person is not able to catch the ball, he/she is out of the game. If the person whose name was called does catch the ball, this person then stands in the centre of the circle, calls the name of someone else in the group, throws the ball into the air, and the “called” person then needs to catch the ball. The game can be made more difficult by making the circle bigger.

Ask the children what relevance they think these activities have to the lesson for today.



Songs:

References:

<http://ministry-to-children.com/preschool-bible-lesson-when-hannah-prayed/>

Gibson, J. (1982) The Daily Bible Study. Samuel.

www.craftingthewordofgod.com

Johannesburg Diocese Children’s Ministry, “Called to teach” handouts

http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2016/10/the-power-of-prayer-skittles-experiment_37.htm



Worksheet: (Hannah’s prayer of praise is: God heard my prayer and he answered me. What God wants of us: Listen to me.)

Hannah Prays

1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:18-21



God heard my prayer and He answered me!

**G O D H E A R
N A R E Y L D
D I S T A R M
H W E R E P Y
E S N E D T O
A N M E M E !**

Hannah had faith that God loved her and listened to her prayer. She told everyone what God did for her. You will find Hannah's prayer for praise in the word puzzle below. Starting at the top of the puzzle, draw a line and follow the letters through the maze. You can go up, down and sideways, but not diagonally. Use each letter only once. The remaining letters will spell what God wants of us!



The people want a King: Saul

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: 1 Sam 8

Theme: Kingship; servant leadership

Memory verse: "The one who rules with justice, in obedience to God is like the sun shining on a cloudless dawn, the sun that makes the grass sparkle after rain." 2 Sam 23:3-4



Information for the teacher:

When the Israelites left Egypt, their leaders were Moses, Aaron and Miriam. They did not have a king. Once they settled in Canaan they continued in this pattern. God raised people up such as Joshua, Deborah, Gideon and Samson to act as their leaders – these people were known as judges. Samuel was the last of the judges and he represented a change from the charismatic, judges to a new prophetic leadership model. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. When he was old, Samuel made his sons Joel and Abiah judges over Israel. But they did not walk in God's ways for they took bribes and delivered false judgements, and so the people of Israel asked for a king to rule over them like other nations.

This desire of the Israelites for an earthly king is considered a rejection of Yahweh as their king (1 Sam 8:7, 10:19). Samuel tried to warn them of how an earthly king would behave and how he would exploit them (1 Sam 8:10-18), but the people did not listen and so Saul was chosen as Israel's first king.

At first Saul was a great king, leading the Israelites into many battles against their enemies the Philistines, but after a while he began to disobey the laws of the Lord. Samuel warned Saul to change his ways, but Saul continued to estrange himself from God.

In today's lesson, we learn of this time when the nation of Israel rejected God's kingship over them in favour of an earthly king. We will look at the characteristics of a godly leader who tries to follow the ways of God and to do God's will. This kind of leadership is often known as servant leadership. We are reminded in this lesson that God rules with love, stands for justice, compassion and mercy and embraces all. We too need to show those leadership characteristics and live according to God's principles in all that we do.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To know the story of Israel's first king, Saul. To be reminded that God is our ultimate leader. To know what is meant by a good king / leader
- To live as servant leaders following Jesus' example.



Attention Grabber:

Play "Follow my Leader". The teacher can start as the leader and the children follow copying her actions. Do actions such as hop, jump, wave your arms or anything else that you like and the children can copy. Children can also take turns to lead.

God's people, the Israelites need someone to follow – someone to lead them, tell them what to do and how to live their lives. They wanted a king. Today we will learn how the people got what they wanted.



Bible Story: Saul is made King (1 Sam 8-15)

(If possible, make use of a children's bible with pictures of Samuel and Saul as you tell this story.)

What do you remember about the story of Samuel? *(Samuel was a small boy when God called Samuel and asked him to be a messenger for God.)*

Samuel did as God asked of him for all the days of his life. When Samuel was old, God's people came to him and said that they wanted a king. Samuel was not happy as he knew that God was the King of these people. Samuel warned them that the king would bully them and steal from them and put harsh laws over them. But the people still wanted a king. So Samuel did as the people wanted. Saul was chosen by Samuel to be king.

Saul was a good looking and big man. To begin with, Saul was a good king and looked after the people of God well. The people loved Saul. But, after a while, Saul began to do things that God did not like. Saul started to boss people around, he did things that only a priest should do, he no longer gave others praise for doing great things, but tried to pretend he was the only great person. Samuel told Saul that he needed to follow God in all that he did, but Saul did not do as Samuel asked.

And so Samuel went back to Saul and said, "Because you have not done as God wants you to do, you are no longer king of God's people."



Discussion:

1. Today we learnt about a king. What was his name? *(Saul)*
2. Discuss with the children what they think of when they think of a king. Perhaps show them a picture of a king from a fairy tale. Discuss that kings in fairy tales such as Frozen and Moana

and any others that you know. What did the Kings do? (They usually take care of the people and make rules by which the people live. The people do as the king says – they follow the king.)

3. What is a good leader like?
4. How do you think others feel if you boss them around?
5. Can you tell us about a leader in your life?
6. In what ways is God a leader in your life?

For the teacher – to help lead the discussion.

How do you know the difference between bosses and leaders? By ages five and six, you can tell the difference as around this age empathy starts to come into play. So here are some things that leaders (rather than bosses) learn and do.

1. Leaders learn limits. After a while they let someone else choose the game or at least compromise and take turns.
2. Leaders by age four have some regard for others' feelings. They stop demanding their way if they see someone is upset by this.
3. Leaders develop some restraint. They suppress their wishes to control everyone and demonstrate sensitivity and understanding of others' wishes.
4. Leaders are honest about what they want without trying to fool others by changing the rules just to get what they want or to win unfairly.
5. Leaders know how to be cheerful when they don't get their way.
6. Leaders know when to stop and listen to someone else.
7. Leaders don't take advantage of the shy, more reticent children.
8. Leaders are enthusiastic and sociable but make friends with those who are more passive.
9. Leaders become less demanding of others while staying demanding of themselves. They are hardworking and persistent.
10. Leaders may be outspoken but don't hurt people in the process.
11. Leaders slowly begin to think before they act.
12. Leaders like being the center of attention but not at the expense of others.
13. Leaders start to realize others have good ideas, too.
14. Leaders use their enthusiasm for accomplishing goals.
15. Leaders may be dominating but know how to be likable.



Prayer: Dear Lord Jesus. We thank you that you are King of our lives. Help us to be like you in all that we do. Amen



Craft: Make a crown. All that is required is a strip of cardboard long enough to go around a child's head – you may need to staple two pieces together to make it long enough. The children can then decorate the crown using crayons, glitter, stickers, foil, cut out shapes etc. You can write on the crowns, "Jesus is my King" or "God is king of my life" etc



Songs: Any song declaring that Jesus is our King can be used.



Physical activity: "Mighty king, mighty king, may we cross your golden river"

In our story today we have learnt how the king tells his people what to do and how to live their lives. He makes the rules of the land. Who is the King of our lives? (*God / Jesus!!*)

To play the game for today, one person is chosen to be the king. All the other children line up on the other side of the "river" to the king. The river can be a line drawn across the play area. The children then ask, "Mighty king, Mighty king, may we cross your golden river."

The king answers, "Not unless you have the colour" or "Not unless you are wearing" etc. The children who have the correct colour or clothes can safely cross the river and make their way to a safe area on the other side of the play area. The other children must now try to run across to safety without being caught. If they are caught, they join and king and try to catch the other children when they next try to cross the river. The winner is the last remaining child.



Older children (7 – 13 years):

To know the story of Israel's first king, Saul.

To think what makes a good or bad leader – their characteristics.

To think about the ways in which God is a leader in your life?



Attention Grabber: Dress a king / queen

The children form groups of about 3 or 4 children. Each group is to choose a king or a queen. They then decorate their king / queen making use of the materials suggested below or materials that they may be able to find around them e.g. flowers, leaves etc. Give the children about 10 minutes to dress their royalty. Then have a parade and choose the best dressed king/ queen.

Materials could include toilet paper, newspaper, plastic bags, streamers, foil, coloured paper, cotton wool, markers, stickers, table cloths, fabric scraps, tape etc

OR

Ask the children if they know the names of any South African kings or chiefs.

Today we will learn about Israel's first King. The Israelites needed someone to follow – someone to lead them, tell them what to do and how to live their lives. Today we will learn how the people got what they wanted.



Bible Story: Saul is made King (1 Sam 8 -15)

What do you remember about the story of Samuel? (*Samuel was a small boy when God called Samuel and asked him to be a messenger for God.*)

Samuel did as God asked of him for all the days of his life. When he was old, Samuel made his sons Joel and Abiah judges over Israel. But they did not walk in the ways of the Lord, and so the people of Israel asked for a king to judge over them like other nations.

Samuel was not happy as he knew that God was the King of the Israelites, but God said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of all the people, for it is not you that they have rejected, but me – they have forgotten me and served false gods since the day I brought them out of Egypt. So listen to their voice, but do first tell them what kind of a king is going to reign over them."

And so Samuel said to the people "This is the kind of king who will reign over you. He will take your sons to be his horsemen, and to run before his chariots, to farm his land and reap his harvests and to make his weapons and his chariots. He will take your daughters to be his cooks and bakers; he will take your fields and your vineyards. He will take your best young men and animals and put them to work for him. He will raise taxes to take care of himself. And you will complain and mourn because of the king you have chosen."

However, the people did not listen to the voice of Samuel. They said, "We want a king like all the other nations, a king to judge us and fight our battles"

God said to Samuel, "Give them their way and find them a king", and so God chose a man called Saul to be the first king of Israel. God sent Samuel to anoint Saul as King.

Saul was the most handsome man of Israel, and he stood head and shoulders above the others. He became a great king and he led the children of Israel into many battles against their enemies. The people loved Saul, but after a while Saul disobeyed the laws of the Lord. Samuel warned Saul to change his ways, but Saul continued to move further and further away from God. And so Samuel went back to Saul and said, "Because you have rejected the command of the Lord, the Lord has rejected you as king."



Review questions:

1. Do you remember the meaning of a judge in Old Testament times? Can you remember the names of some of the judges of Israel? *(A judge was someone called by God to lead the people of Israel in doing God's way and to free them from their oppressors. The judges we learnt about were Deborah, Gideon and Samson)*
2. Why did the Israelites want a king? *(They wanted to be like all the other nations; they also didn't want Samuel's sons to be judges as they did not walk in the ways of the Lord.)*
3. Who warned the Israelites against an earthly king? *(Samuel)*
4. Why did Samuel warn them against a king? *(1 Samuel 8:10 – the king would exploit their sons and daughters, take land for himself and his officials and enslave them)*
5. Who was the first King of Israel? *(Saul)*
6. What is the difference between king Saul and kings today *(Today often hereditary and follows a family line. Saul was anointed and his sons were not made king after him.)*
7. Was King Saul a good king? *(He was to begin with and the people loved him and did as he said, but after a while he became bad – he no longer listened to what God wanted him to do. The Lord then rejected Saul as King.)*



Discussion:

1. When you think of a king (or a queen), either present or past, what images or words do you associate with this term? *(There is no correct answer – children may mention glamorous, rich, in-charge, taking care of people, head of the people, brave, etc)*
2. What type of king or leader would you like to serve? *(Again, allow the children to give their opinions. The characteristics of a king or leader they would like to follow may include someone who is good, kind, big-hearted, courageous, just and fair, standing up for the rights of people etc)*
3. What are the characteristics of a good leader?
4. What does it mean to serve?
5. When do you obey and when do you not obey a leader?
6. In what ways is God / Jesus the leader of your life? How is this reflected in your life? *(Jesus / God is King of our lives. We reflect this by behaving as our King would behave – we are caring, loving, stand up for what is right, look after the poor etc. We live by God's Kingdom principles i.e. our lives reflect righteousness (stand up for what is right), peace, joy, love etc)*



Prayer: Dear God. We thank you that you are leader of our lives. May we follow your commands in all we do and help us to be more like you. May we be loving and caring to others, and give us courage and wisdom to help us to stand up for what is right. Amen



Songs: Any song declaring that Jesus is our King can be used.



Worksheet: Spot the difference

This worksheet can be found at the end of this lesson. Children need to study the 2 different pictures of a king. The one picture is a picture of King Saul and the second is a picture of Jesus. The children write down as many differences as they can between these 2 kings.

Here are some examples:

King Saul

Earthly king
Rode a chariot
Exploited the people
Did not live according to God's laws
Stored riches on earth
Proud
Self-serving
Fought battles
Wore a crown of jewels
Had servants

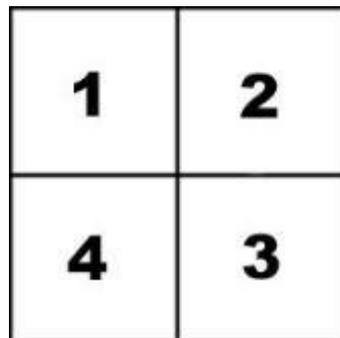
Jesus

Eternal king
Rode a donkey
Looked after the people
Lived according to God's laws
Stored riches in heaven
Humble
Served others
Preached peace
Wore a crown of thorns
Was a servant to others



Physical activity: Four square

For this game you need some chalk, a patch of concrete, a ball (a tennis ball is best) and at least four people. Using the chalk, draw a large square at least two metres wide and divide this big square into four equally sized squares. Number the squares as shown in the diagram below:



Four Squares

How to play:

1. Each player stands in one of the four squares. The person standing in square 4 is the "king", square 3 is the "queen", square 2 is the "knight", and square 1 is a "commoner".
2. To start the game, the king "serves" the ball by bouncing it in his/her square and then hitting it towards one of the other squares.
3. The person in the receiving square then hits the ball to any other player in one of the other squares, who then tries to hit the ball, and so the game continues, until someone is not able to hit the ball, or the ball misses the squares.
4. The person who makes the mistake is "out", and the other players move up to take his/ her place i.e. if the "queen" makes a mistake, then the "knight" moves into the "queen's" position, and the "commoner" moves into the "knight's" position. Someone who was not part of the game that has just been played then moves to square 1.
5. The aim of the game is to become king – i.e. to hold the position of square 4. The king is always the person who serves the ball to start the game.

Spot the difference



King Saul



Jesus

How many differences can you find between these two

King Saul

Jesus

Strive: mutual custodianship

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: *Genesis 1*

Theme: *Creation – the Earth Story*

Memory verse: *“God saw all that God had made, and it was very good.” Gen 1:31*



Information for the teacher:

The Church observes the season of creation and acknowledges that the earth is in a sad state. In our busy lives, especially for city dwellers we are often not aware of the extent of the destruction. But we need to face the possibility that the earth will no longer be able to care for future generations as the damage is so extensive. We are just so out of tune with the earth that we don't hear the cries of pain, we are ignorant of the oceans and even when we do see the pollution around us, we may feel helpless to make a real difference and there seem to be so many other problems. Somehow, we need the courage and inspiration to strive to improve things.

In the past Christians have been accused of aiding and abetting the destruction of the earth. For example, Lynn White accuses the anthropomorphic (people centered) and exploitative attitudes of dominant Christian theology of giving religious support to the notion that the world was created primarily for the benefit of humans. He concludes that "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt for the environmental crisis" (White 1967:1205, 1207).

Christianity alone cannot carry the blame for the destruction of earth, but we can seek to find the hidden texts that speak of the mutual custodianship and mutual dependency and the interconnection between all living creatures and the earth. We can move from a human centered interpretation of the scriptures to an earth centered interpretation. We can reject the domination paradigm and instead discover a non-hierarchical, inclusive paradigm that better fits the overall biblical narrative and our modern context. In this lesson, we are teaching a term called mutual custodianship which means that we look after the Earth so that the Earth can look after us.

In the beginning God created darkness and light and they were both good and both needed, Night and Day, sun and moon all vital for the well-being of Earth. God created land and sky and sea. And they were all good. They have intrinsic worth – that is not to be measured in terms of their worth for people. The world is made up of interrelated interconnected systems and we mess with or damage things at the jeopardy of many other things. Life is precarious and the earth groans in pain at the damage that is inflicted.

Today, the first lesson in our Season of Creation series for this year, we celebrate dark and light, land sea and sky. But we also develop an awareness of the danger the earth is in and the ways in which the earth has been damaged. We look at what we can do and try and give hope and a new way of seeing things that we can strive to care for the earth and limit the damage we do.



Lesson Suggestions:

Lesson Objectives:

- To gain an appreciation all Creation, and think especially of dark and light
- To realise that we are dependent on the well-being of the earth.
- To introduce the concept of mutual custodianship rather than domination or even stewardship
- To realise that all creatures have a role to play in the web of life, and that we are to strive to care for and respect all Creation



Attention Grabber:

Explain to the children that today is the beginning of spring. During September we celebrate the Season of Creation where we are reminded of the beautiful world around us. Today we are specifically celebrating light and dark and the land and water.



Bible Story: Genesis 1 (The story of Creation)

The Earth story

In the beginning there was darkness. God spoke and said, “Let there be light.”

God made the sun to shine in the day and the moon and stars to shine in the night.

God said, “Let there be sky and land and sea.” And so it was.

God made the fish and creatures that swim in the sea.

God made the birds that fly in the air and every animal that lives on the land

In the beginning, when the world was new, God saw all that was made, and it was very good!



Discussion questions

God created both light and dark. Are you afraid of the dark? Why?

What happens in the dark? – think of good things as well as bad such as sleep, roots growing underground, etc.

What is good about the dark? What is good about the light?

If there was no electricity, what would we do?

All is needed – the balance of light and dark.



Craft activities:

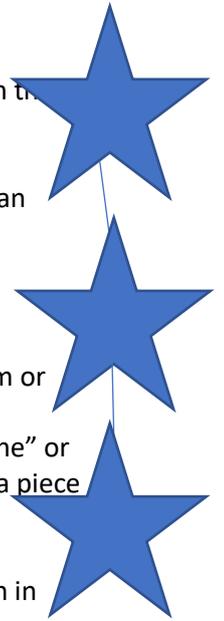
There are two options for today’s craft. This first one focuses on the Heavens – the sun, the moon and the stars – the lessons over the next few weeks will focus on other aspects of creation.

Perhaps begin the craft session by asking the children how many stars they think are in the sky. Then ask the children to make as many dots as they can on a piece of paper in 1 minute. Ask them to count how many dots they have drawn. Explain that even if they carried on making as many dots as

they could for the rest of their life, they would still not make as many dots as there are stars in the sky. Isn't that amazing!!

Children can draw stars and the moon on a white piece of paper, using a white crayon. They can then paint over the piece of paper with black or blue poster paint – the paint will reveal what they have drawn. You can emphasise with this craft that in the beginning, there was nothing, except God. God created the stars.

Another option is for children to cut out stars from paper (or Styrofoam trays) and colour them or decorate (NOT with glitter as it is plastic and bad for the environment). The children can then either add all their stars to a bulletin board with a heading such as "God made the stars to shine" or each child can make their own star mobile as shown below –attach each star to another with a piece of string.



The second craft focuses on the idea of winter being a time when the life of the tree is hidden in the dark and then in spring comes out into the light. The children can make a winter tree using sticks, twigs, sand or anything else you can think of. They could do this as a craft activity using glue to stick things and make a picture of a tree. However, they could simply make trees and then return the twigs etc to the earth, to where they found them.

They could decorate their trees with leaves or blossoms – either form paper or real leaves etc.



Snack: The children enjoy icing biscuits and then decorating them using icing and hundreds and thousands. If possible, the biscuits should be shaped as stars. Or they can butter bread, cut it in the shape of a star and decorate it.



Physical activities: Perhaps before the lesson put a number of stars all over an area. Ask the children to find how many stars you have put out for them to find.

You could build a dark tent out of chairs, blankets etc.

Psalm 148: 1-6 reflects some of the emotions this particular psalmist felt. *Read this psalm to the children.*

And here is another psalm, again probably reflecting our own thoughts. *Read Psalm 8: 1,3-4 Allow for some quiet time as the children reflect on the lesson for today. If they wish, they may say a prayer aloud or in their hearts. Someone may also like to lead the group in a song of praise.*

And so, as you go out into the world this week, do think about the seemingly simple miracles of nature that surround you everyday – the rising and setting of the sun, the constant coming in and going out of the sea tides, the same star studded sky that our psalmists stared at so many years before. As you look at the world with new eyes this week, may all that you see around you be a reminder of God!



Songs



Prayer

Dear God help us to love all of creation and to care for all the plants and animals and even the stones and the insects. Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To gain an appreciation all Creation, and think especially of dark and light
- To realise that we are dependent on the well-being of the earth.
- To introduce the concept of mutual custodianship rather than domination or even stewardship
- To realise that all creatures have a role to play in the web of life, and that we are to look after and respect all Creation



Older children:

Way far away - it's in Outer Space.

Outer space!! It's big and there's a lot in it!

Imagining distances is difficult – everything is so far apart

Billions & billions of stars - There are far more than you could count.

The nearest star is our sun. Did you know that if we could drive in a car to get to the Sun at 100 km/h it would take 171 years?! And to get to the next closest star, Proxima Centauri, would take 40,000 years! And most other things - billions and billions of stars - are much, much farther away than that! But back to our Solar System, which is also VERY BIG and our planet earth is actually very small.

The distance between the planets is also very big, as you will find in the following activity:

Sun – Use a soccer ball to represent the size of the sun – did you know that the sun is 300 000 times larger than earth?!

Mercury – Use a peppercorn to represent Mercury and place it 51 cm away from the “sun”

Venus – Use a peppercorn to represent Venus and place it 1.2 m away from the sun

Earth – Use a peppercorn to represent Earth and place it 2.5 m from the sun

Mars – Use a peppercorn to represent Mars and place it 4 m from the sun

Jupiter – Use a small marble and place it 15 m from the sun

Saturn – Use a small marble and place it 25 m from the sun

Uranus – Use a large bead and place it 36 m from the sun

Neptune – Use a large bead and place it 76 m from the sun

Pluto – Use a peppercorn and place it 200 m from the sun (NB: Pluto is no longer regarded as a planet but an asteroid)

Proxima Centauri – would be represented by a tennis ball and placed 700km from the sun!

You could also use playdough to represent the planets.



Bible Story: Genesis 1 (The story of Creation)

The Earth story

In the beginning there was darkness. God spoke and said, “Let there be light.”

God made the sun to shine in the day and the moon and stars to shine in the night.

God said, “Let there be sky and land and sea.” And so it was.

God made the fish and creatures that swim in the sea.

God made the birds that fly in the air and every animal that lives on the land

In the beginning, when the world was new, God saw all that was made, and it was very good!

You can then contrast this with the Human story.
What have humans created on the earth? Is it all very good?
What is good?
What is not good?
Are there some things that are both good and bad?



Discussion questions

God created both light and dark. Are you afraid of the dark? Why?
What happens in the dark? – think of good things as well as bad such as sleep, rots growing underground, etc.
What is good about the dark? What is good about the light?
If there was not electricity, what would we do?

What do you think heaven looks like?



Craft activities:

There is a choice of activities. You could also do the same ones as for the younger children. Here are some ideas:

1. You may like to give the children a choice as to how they would like to respond to today's lesson. Perhaps they would like to write their own psalm or song of praise. Perhaps they would like to present a well-known song to the class that tells of God's awesome creation of stars and moon, light and dark. Perhaps they would like to create a poster with an inspiring message about creation.
2. The following exercise will give the children an idea of how big the solar system is! You will need a tape measure, although perhaps for the bigger distances the children will enjoy estimating the distance by "jumping" out the metres. Perhaps give each planet to a different child to measure out the distance that the planet needs to be placed from the sun. The children need to stay with their planet so that everyone can see how far away the planets are from each other. At the beginning of this exercise draw attention to the size of the planets relative to the sun.
3. Play hopscotch, with enough blocks for the number of planets in the solar system– the children need to try to remember the names and the order of the planets.
4. Think of ways they can strive to protect the environment



Prayer:

If possible, sit outside. Encourage the children to sit quietly and listen to the sounds around them. Try to block out "human-made sounds" – listen to the natural sounds e.g. the birds in the trees; the wind rustling the leaves.



Snack: Organise a picnic to celebrate the beginning of Spring.

The older children will enjoy the following True or False questions. They may prefer to work in groups for this activity. Each child / group can be given a piece of paper where they write down their answer for each question. (All the answers are True!!)

1. No two zebras have the same striped patterns
2. Tapeworms can live for 35 years
3. It takes 2 years for a pineapple to grow to its full size
4. It is possible for a female cat to be responsible for the birth of 20 736 kittens in 4 years
5. The arctic tern is a bird which flies from the north pole to the south pole each year. When added up over a lifetime, the total journey of the bird is the same as a trip to the moon and back!
6. It takes 22 months for a baby elephant to be born
7. It takes 6 months for a baby elephant to learn how to control its trunk
8. A new born giraffe is about 2 m tall
9. Dolphins sleep with one eye open
10. All ants in the world weigh more than all the people in the world put together
11. A blue whale's tongue weighs more than most elephants
12. Snails can sleep for up to 3 years at a time
13. Gold fish need light to keep their colour

After the quiz, discuss with the children that we have learnt some amazing facts about the world around us. It is very important to realize that we look after all creatures, even those we do not like e.g. spiders, mosquitoes, lizards, snakes, bats, chameleons, owls etc. Each animal, no matter how small, is an amazing part of creation and has an important role in the web of life. We need to respect all parts of God's Creation.

References:

Season of Creation, Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Special thanks to Noeleen Mullett – JAIE / EcoAct

www.sermons4kids.com

Safeguard creation: Water

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: *Exodus 17: 1-7. It may be helpful to look at different readings about water.*

Theme: *Safeguarding Water -the source of life*

Memory verse: *Jn 4:14: Jesus said, "Whoever drinks the water I give will never be thirsty again."*



Information for the teacher:

Water is a precious gift that gives and sustains our lives. Both in the Bible, and in our current society, water is deeply life-giving. We need to safeguard our wetlands and save water.

The sad reality is that even though all of creation needs water for survival, sadly, there are many people who do not have access to drinking water: About 2.2 billion people throughout the world do not have access to drinking water. Despite the fact that most of the earth is covered in water, only about 3% is actually drinkable. This means that water is not only precious, but we must do everything we can to safeguard our water. As Christians, it is our duty to care for the earth and not pollute and damage it. It is our duty to love others, and also all of God's creation. This is what today's lesson aims to achieve.

Water is described and mentioned throughout the Bible. In the Book of Genesis, the river that flows out of Eden, to become the watershed that cradles civilization (Gen 2:10-14).

Revelations describes the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; On each side of the river was the tree of life which bears fruit twelve times a year, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Rev 22:1-7.

In the Exodus reading the Israelites are in the desert and they complain to God because they don't know how they will survive in the dessert without water. God once again provides for them. In today's lesson we look at how precious water is. It is the source of life and we look at how we should appreciate what God has given us.

Sources:

'Water Facts of Life: Ride the Water Cycle With These Fun Facts.' Available from:

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Lesson Suggestions: Younger children (3-6 years)

Lesson Objectives:

- To realise the fullness and importance of water
- To be aware of ways in which we can save water and not pollute water
- To know that God provided resources to let the Earth live and we need to take care of it.



Attention Grabber:

As children arrive, greet them but maintain an atmosphere of calm and silence as you play recorded sounds /of rain, running streams, waves rolling onto the shore and washing over rock. Show the children pictures of water – waterfalls, the sea, animals and people playing in water. You can discuss the pictures with the children. Many nature magazines contain pictures of water which you can use or look for pictures on the internet. Show the children a globe or a map and have them point out the oceans and ask what creatures live in the oceans. Again, use pictures to encourage them to share ideas.



Bible Story: Exodus 17: 1-7

If you have a children's bible please read out of that bible



Discussion:

1. Who of you have run through a sprinkler on a hot summer day? How many of you have walked in the rain, and splashed in the puddles? How many of you can swim? What else do we use water for? (To bath in and wash our hands; to drink; to cool down in; to play in.) Apart from us who and what else needs water to survive?
2. Where does the water that we drink come from? (Rivers, not just the tap!)
3. *For the slightly older children:* Did you know that the water we use is the same water that the dinosaurs swam in millions of years ago?! No water has been made or destroyed since the beginning of the world. How is this possible? (Briefly describe the water cycle – the story of a rain drop can be found at the end of this lesson)
4. Water is very precious to us – without water we cannot live. We must look after our water and not waste it. What can we do to not waste water? (Look out for leaking taps – either switch them off yourself or ask someone to do it for you. If you have running water at home, don't leave the tap running while you brush your teeth; have a shower instead of a bath full of water)
5. Did you know that we also look after water if we do not litter? We must put all our rubbish into bins and not just drop it on the ground. What do you think is the most dangerous 'thing' in the sea? (Allow the children to give answers.) Then show the children plastic bottle, or a plastic bag crunched up in a tub of water. Sadly, plastic leads to the death of many sea animals every year. Even if you live far from a river or the sea, a plastic bag can easily get into a drain and make its way to a river and then to the sea. Do you think this is what God would want for creation?



Prayer: Dear God. We thank you for the precious gift of water you have given us. Without water we would not have this beautiful world. Please help us to always look after the world around us – help us to not waste water and to keep it clean. Amen



Craft: In this craft you will need a paper plate, something that could resemble water like tissue paper.

Have the children draw the rock and Moses with a staff on the paper plate. With a pair of scissors make a slit in the middle of their rocks and put the tissue paper or fabric through the slit fastening it at the back with some sticky tape.



Or

Sponge - decorate a sponge like a stone and squeeze it and water comes out. Like it may have happened on the rock

Or

Raindrop hangers: At their age, they already know that water can come from the rain. We should appreciate when it rains because it gives us water which goes to our rivers, feeds our plants and animals. With the help of the teacher (especially in cutting the paper into raindrop shapes), they can make raindrop posters. They could take them home and put it somewhere. When they see it, they will be reminded about the importance of water. (it may be better suited to the older children. It all depends on your group).





Physical activities: The water game.

You will need two containers per team and one plastic cup or bottle with holes in it, All players line up on the side with one container that has water in it, fill the cup or bottle and that person needs to run to the other side to fill the other container (because of the holes in the bottle/cup the water is going to run out). The first team to fill their container wins. *After the game, get the children to disperse the water into the garden where it can be life-giving for the plants.*

Water relay

The children are divided into teams for the relay. They have to carry a cup of water as they run and not spill it and then give it to the next child who runs with it. *After the game, get the children to disperse the water into the garden where it can be life-giving for the plants.*



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson Objectives:

- To realise the fullness and importance of water.
- To be aware of ways in which we can save water and not pollute water.
- To know that God provided resources to let the Earth live and we need to take care of it.

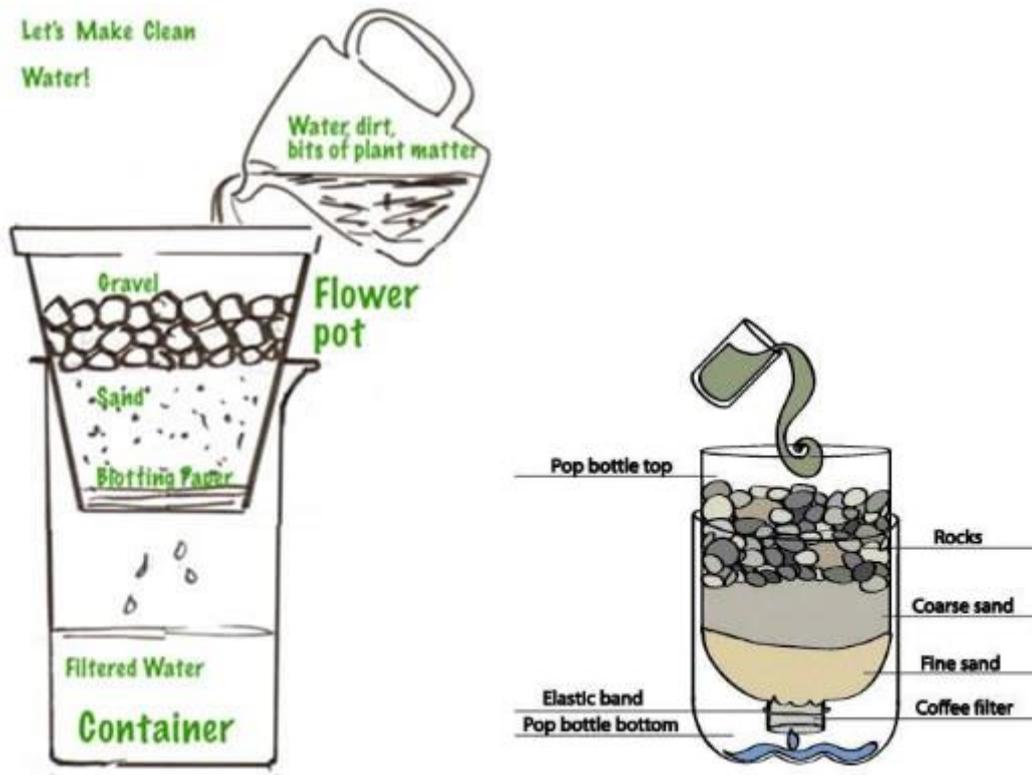
Water attention grabber

Involve children in nature education and help them learn that the choices they make do change the world around them. Rather than overloading children with too many environmental problems focus their attention on actions they can take to help the Earth.

Teaching children to value clean water and care for trees will help them feel more connected to nature. Making clean water and growing tree seedlings, are two easy ways to involve children in nature education.

Make Clean Water

Most young children have not given too much thought to clean water. They turn on the tap and clean, ready to drink water comes out. Some are used to drinking water out of a water filter system.



This nature education experiment shows children how dirty muddy water can be cleaned by filtering it through gravel and sand and shows them what goes on inside a water filtering system.

Materials:

- Gravel and sand
- blotting paper or 3 or 4 coffee filters
- clean flower pot
- transparent jug
- large measuring cup or pouring jug

Have small groups of children take turns making a water filter (or if necessary the class can sit in a circle and watch as you do it).

Procedure:

- Put blotting paper or coffee filters, then sand, and finally gravel in a clean flower pot
- Place the flower pot in a larger transparent container so the filtered water can drip through and the children can observe it
- In a large measuring cup, place dirt, bits of plant matter and water
- Mix it up to make muddy water
- Pour the muddy water into the flower pot as shown in the image on the right
- Children observe the colour of the water dripping out the bottom of the pot into the transparent container
- Ask questions – Where did the dirt go? Why did cleaner water come out?
- Take the filter apart and try to find the dirt and bits of plant matter

More: Try arranging the layers in a different order and compare the colour of the filtered water.



Attention Grabber:

The water filter described above is a good attention grabber and in fact can form much of the lesson. If you find that difficult to do you can instead set out some water in a bowl for water play. Have some bottles, sponges, cups etc to play within the water.

You could also show the children a bottle of dirty water and a bottle of clean water

Which bottle of water would you choose?

What do we need to cleanse water? See the filtering water activity above.

On your way to church did you see water being wasted?

You could talk about the issue of plastic in the water.

You can talk about drought and the importance of water.



Bible Story:

Exodus 17: 1-7

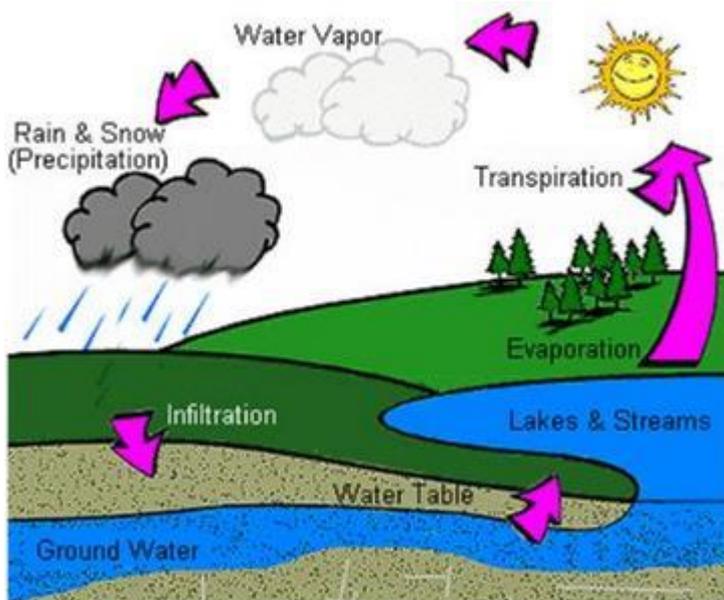
Read from the bible.



Discussion:

1. Here are some amazing facts about water:
 - a. How much of the earth is covered in water? (*Answer is 70 %*)
 - b. How much of the earth's water is sea water? (*Answer is 97%*)
 - c. So, only 3 % of the earth's water is fresh water – water we are able to drink. How much of this fresh water is locked up in the ice caps? (*Answer: 66% of all fresh water can be found in the ice caps. Therefore only 1,2% of all the water on earth is in fact available for us to drink – You can demonstrate this using a 1 litre coke bottle –you can put 12 ml of water into the bottle – if all the earth's water could be represented by 1 litre of water, then only 12 ml of that 1 litre is drinkable!*)

Did you know that the water that God created at the beginning of time is still the same water that we use today? – No water has been created or destroyed over all these years. We are using the same water that the dinosaurs swam in millions of years ago! Isn't that amazing?! (You may need to briefly discuss the water cycle with your class as shown in the diagram below.)



This can also be turned into a craft activity if you don't create the water purifiers:



2. Sadly, however, much of our fresh water is no longer drinkable. Who knows why? (Pollution of rivers due to sewerage and litter; Chemicals, insecticides, poisons, paint, oil is emptied into drains or enters the waterways via storm water drains – if you are not careful as to how you get rid of your waste, this will also end up in rivers.)

Explain to the children that pollution of our waters is a threat to all God's Creation, including humankind! God's world is perfectly balanced – if part of it is disrupted, we are all affected – this is serious for us all!

Many of the reasons for our rivers and seas being so polluted is not something we can do anything about – we can only hope that the government, local organisations and companies manage their waste to ensure that our environment is not harmed. However, we can all play our part in caring for the environment. After today's lesson, is there anything that you should change or that you should encourage those around you to change so that we can better look after our water systems? (Don't litter because when it rains, this litter can end up in rivers, even if you don't live close to a river or the sea. Also encourage those around you to behave responsibly when it comes to looking after our water supplies)

3. Something else we all need to do, especially in South Africa, is to save water wherever we can. South Africa is one of the 20 driest countries in the world. It is predicted that if we continue to use water in the way we do, South Africa will run out of water between 2020 and 2040. How much water do you use every day? If you have running water at home, do you leave the tap running while you are cleaning your teeth? Do you take a shower, which uses 30 litres, a full bath which uses 150 litres, or wash in a basin which uses 10 litres? Do you make sure that you have properly closed the tap when you are finished with it? Do you report any taps that are leaking to your teacher, parent etc?



Physical Activities:

The water game.

You will need two containers per team and one plastic cup or bottle with holes in it, All players line up on the side with one container that has water in it, fill the cup or bottle and that person needs to run to the other side to fill the other container (because of the holes in the bottle/cup the water is going to run out). The first team to fill their container wins

Water relay

The children are divided into teams for the relay. They have to carry a cup of water as they run and not spill it and then give it to the next child who runs with it.

After the game, get the children to disperse the water into the garden where it can be life-giving for the plants.



Prayer:

Dear God.

Thank you for the precious gift of water. Help us to really value it and not to waste it. Help us to keep the rivers and oceans clean.

References:

<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/496029346461020109/>

‘Water Facts of Life: Ride the Water Cycle With These Fun Facts.’ Available from: <https://www3.epa.gov/safewater/kids/waterfactsoflife.html> (Accessed on 18 March 2021)

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Integrity of creation: It's not all about you

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Gen 1: 26-31

Theme: Choices – Diversity of Creation and how we cannot survive without it.

- *Memory verses: In the beginning God created the universe (Gen 1:1)*



Information for the teacher:

For many eco-theologians these verses about the creation of humans and their being given power over the animals and being told to be fruitful, are problematic as they have contributed to the destruction of many animals and plants and have harmed the environment. In these verses God makes all living creatures. God then goes on to make humans, in God's image and humans are given dominion over all creatures. Humans are also told to multiply and to subdue the earth. Another word for subdue is to defeat or overpower.

The New Jerome Biblical commentary highlights that humans were to forcefully bring the land under their control, to make untamed land serve humans. It goes on to say that humans nonetheless are to respect the environment; they are not to kill for food but are to treat all life with respect.

The problematic parts of this passage are the parts where humans are above the creation. Being created in the image of God is mis-interpreted and people think that it means we are like God. The image of God should rather be interpreted in relational terms, similar to the loving relationships within the Trinity. The other issue is the command to multiply. When this passage was written the population was not at the size that it is now. Now the world's population is increasing very fast and many question whether there are enough resources to sustain so many humans. This is in the light of the destruction of the environment, the cutting down of forests, the destruction of the environment for many animals and the pollution of the air and water.

Many have used the term stewardship, being good stewards of the Earth. The Cambridge Dictionary defines Stewardship as: Someone's Stewardship of something is the way in which the person controls or organizes it. The issue with the use of Stewardship is that we see ourselves as being above or in control of the Earth and we have not done a very good job of taking care of it so far.

This lesson is about renewing the earth and our relationship with the earth and all the creatures and plants which make up the earth. We have added that "it's not about you" and it's been called this because we often see creation as being created by God for the benefit of humans. And for that reason, we can do what we like with it. We have used this scripture to manipulate and pillage the Earth for our own gain and it has come at a massive cost.

Everything except humans are needed for the Earth to survive and thrive. In fact, humans have become the disease or parasite that is destroying the planet. In this lesson we are also looking at how everything is important and there needs to be a renewal of our attitudes to the earth and everything in it, even if it is a spider that doesn't appeal to humans. Everything is important and renewing applies to all creation. By changing or removing one species from the eco system it may destroy an eco-system.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

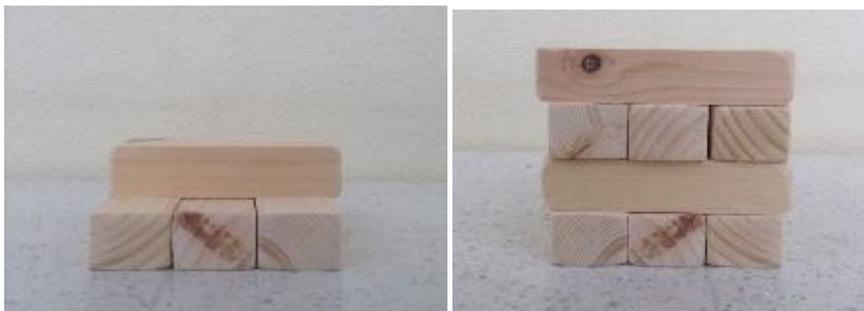
To know that everything in God's creation is as important as we are.
To think what our part in all of creation is.



Attention Grabber:

Jenga is a game of skill and strategy. In the game, you build a tower, move the pieces and hope that you aren't the one who makes it fall.

Jenga is played with 54 wooden blocks. Each block is three times as long as its width, and one fifth as thick as its length $1.5 \times 2.5 \times 7.5$ cm.



Put down placing three blocks facing down. Make three blocks face the left. Keep on doing this until for all blocks.

Jenga played with 2 or more players.

Once the tower is built

Let's start game

1. Try to take a block out by tapping the short side of it, or by pulling it out.
2. Once you pull it out, place the block on the top of the tower - either facing left of the blocks, or facing down, or vice versa.
3. Repeat step #1 until someone makes the Jenga Tower fall

Once you see that the tower has a lot of gaps in it you will see that the structure starts to look unstable, explain that the eco system is like this at first it seems that the structure is stable but the more we destroy and take things out the more likely it is to fall or collapse.

If you don't have the game Jenga you can take yogurt cups, you'll need 10. Each cup represents a different aspect of the environment. Make one of the cups humankind. Then stack the cups in the shape of a pyramid so four on the bottom layer then three, then two and the top one to be humans. Now ask a child to remove the human cup from the pyramid and notice the pyramid still stands but if you remove any of the cups from the rest of the layers it collapses. Illustrating that humans need the environment, but the environment doesn't need humans.



Bible Story: Gen 1:24-31

In the bible story today, we read about how God created all creatures.



Discussion

1. Why do you think God created different types of creatures?

The Earth needs all creatures in which to survive some are there to eat other creatures, or to break down bacteria, or to bring good soil to the top of the pile to help plants grow. All creatures have a role to play in the environment.

2. What about a creature like a frog, what do you think God made frogs for?

They play an **important** role in consuming insects and are an **important** food source for birds, snakes, and other animals throughout the food web.

3. Should we kill animals or insects that can hurt us like bees?

No bees and other insects play a vital role in pollinating and fertilising plants so without them the plants will not survive. (Also from a human view they make honey and pollinate our crops)

Today's lesson

The Earth is a wonderful and interesting place. There are many things that live on it that we wouldn't necessarily see unless you look hard to see them. Often things live underground or high up in trees and unless you're really looking hard you don't see them. Sometimes we don't like some of the creatures and we don't think they serve a purpose for us humans like what's the point of having mosquitos?

The thing is mosquitos and ants and even cockroaches are just as important as cows and chickens and rhino's they are just if not more important than us...

When we think we don't need a certain type of creature and we get rid of it, it does a lot of damage to the other creatures we do need. And if we take one creature away, some the other creatures then don't have food, or they are not food, so the balance then isn't there and like the Jenga blocks everything collapses.

If we don't have the earth if the Earth doesn't work, we can't live.



Physical activities:

Go outside and see how many different creatures they can find. Tell them to look for certain creatures (you will need to look first before, so they know what to look for). So, ask them to find an ant (they must not try to pick up or kill the ant but let you know that they found it). Ask them to find a beetle or maybe a worm or a bee or a lady bug and then see if they can find something that you didn't ask them to find.

Another game you can play is the name game. Have the children stand in a circle and each child must choose a different animal (no two children can have the same animal) once everyone has a different animal the game can begin. One person starts they need to say their animals name

so, for example, they will say cat and then they must call another person's animal so elephant. The person who is the elephant then needs to say their name elephant and then call someone else's animal like frog and so the game continues. If someone makes a mistake like not saying their animal first or calling an animal that is not in the circle or an animal of someone who is out that person must sit down. This can be done to a rhythm and if they break the rhythm they are out. (This for slightly older children).



Prayer: Dear God please help me to remember that your whole creation needs every creature to exist, help me to play my part in the environment.

Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

To understand that we need to take care of the Earth for the Earth to take care of us.



Attention Grabber:

Jenga is a game of skill and strategy. In the game, you build a tower, move the pieces and hope that you aren't the one who makes it fall. (See younger group picture and instructions)

Once the tower is built, the game starts:

1. Try to take a block out by tapping the short side of it, or by pulling it out.
2. Once you pull it out, place the block on the top of the tower - either facing left of the blocks, or facing down, or vice versa.
3. Repeat step #1 until someone makes the Jenga Tower fall.

Once you see that the tower has a lot of gaps in it you will see that the structure starts to look unstable, explain that the eco system is like this at first it seems that the structure is stable but the more we destroy and take things out the more likely it is to fall or collapse.

Like with the younger children if you don't have the game Jenga you can use yogurt cups.



Bible Story: Gen 1: 24-31 You can include earlier verses about the creation of the animals and plants etc.

In this lesson we learn about how God creates all creatures, domesticated, wild those that creep and humans.



Discussion questions

1. Do you think that we take care of the Earth?
2. Why do you think God made different types of animals?
3. Why do you think God made the animals that don't seem to have a purpose?
4. How much do you know about different types of creatures?

Lesson

Sometimes we only see what we think we need, like for example when you get into a car all you see is what is in front of you, the key turns and the car starts, and you move forward. However, there is a lot more that goes into the running of a car and when things go wrong with the car the car will just stop running.

The environment is like this we see what we think we need to survive and nothing else really matters until that little thing that keeps it running dies out and then so does the environment. The truth of the matter is the Earth doesn't really need us. If humans were for some reason to disappear off the earth, the earth would survive in fact it would probably thrive. We need the Earth to survive if the Earth dies so do we. If different species (not just the rhinos) are lost the environment gets weaker and eventually will collapse. All species depend on each other for survival and so do we.



Physical activities:

Elimination tag

Start a normal game of tag. Have one person who's on who needs to catch the people around them. Once you have been caught you need to sit out. Once everyone has been caught play the game again only this time the person who is on may only touch someone on the elbow for them to be out. Play until everyone is out. Play the game again this time the person who is on may not use their hands they can only get people out by touching them on the knee but must use their shoulders to touch them. Play until everyone is out. Then play again and the person who is on must touch people to get them out but may not physically touch them in any form. (the game cannot be played from this point on.) This is to illustrate that you need all components to play the game correctly and you can make adjustment but eventually it can't be played which is just like the environment eventually we will have destroyed so many aspects of the environment that it will not be able to survive.



Prayer: Dear God, thank you for your diverse creation. We pray that we remember that we are only one part in this very large eco system, please help us to remember where we fit into this system. We pray this in your name.

Amen

Sustain the land and plants

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: *Genesis 1:11-13*

Theme: *land and plants*

Memory verses:



Information for the teacher

Whether one believes in evolution or not, it is wonderful to see the diversity of plants on the Earth and to know that in some wonderful way they are created by God and are loved by God and seen as good. Though humans are allowed to use plants, they are from God, and should be respected and never wilfully destroyed. They should be used in God's service.

South Africa is rich in both plant and animal diversity. We have over 1000 kinds of trees, while the whole of Europe has fewer than 700. The Cape Fynbos is one of the world's most diverse floral kingdoms – Table Mountain alone hosts as many plant species as in the U.K. – all 1500 species of them – making the Western Cape more botanically diverse than the richest tropical rain forest in South America.

We need to nurture and protect our environment. With growing urbanisation there is the tendency to remove the green belts of our surroundings. With that, millions of animals lose their habitat. The removal of grasslands and large forest areas is a worldwide phenomenon. Since the industrial era, more than half the world's original forests have been destroyed and millions of animals have been endangered. If this encroachment of the natural habitat is not regulated, more than half our plant and animal species will become extinct. Remember we need the earth to live but if humans had to disappear the earth will carry on without us.

Today's lesson aims to instil an appreciation for nature around us, and an awareness of the plight of our fauna and flora. The more the children know about nature and the birds and animals they more they will love and care for them. As a children's ministry, you may consider planning a hike or a picnic for the children to a nearby nature reserve or botanical garden, for it is in nature that we feel oneness with all creation!

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

To learn more about the trees, plants and grasses.

To live in the world in a sustainable way.



Attention Grabber:

The Bible reading (Gen 1: 10 - 13) for today is incorporated into the attention grabber. This is an interactive way of telling a story. Have your children act out a certain aspect of the story, encourage them to include sound effects etc.



The Bible reading (Gen 1: 11 - 13)

God called the dry ground “land.” **(have the children pretend to be land)**

God called the waters that were gathered together “oceans.” **(pretend to be the ocean)**

And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the land produce plants. **(Let them pretend that they are growing plants)**

“Let them bear their own seeds. And let there be trees on the land that bear fruit with seeds in it.

(have the children pretend to be trees)

Let each kind of plant and tree have its own kind of seed.” And that’s exactly what happened.

The land produced plants. Each kind of plant had its own kind of seeds. The land produced trees that bore fruit with seeds in it. **(pretend to be different kinds of fruit)**

Each kind of tree had its own kind of seeds.

God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning — It was day three.



Discussion questions

What is your favourite fruit to eat?

What is your favourite vegetable?

Do you have a favourite tree or plant? What are they?

Do you have a favourite animal?

Today we will begin our lesson by going outside to look at the beautiful plants that God has created. Take the children outside to collect as many different green leaves as possible or, if your church does not have many plants, or diverse types of plants, then bring a collection of leaves with you to your lesson.

Ask your children if they realised that there were so many different types of leaves, colours of plants or if they saw any insects or birds.

Do the children also know that plants are the homes to millions of animals? Discuss which animals they think live in trees and amongst plants.



Craft:

Organic planting pots using old newspapers

This is a fantastic way of making your own organic planting pots. The pots are great for your small plants, they can be put very tightly together and when the plant is ready to be put into the ground you can plant it with the pot still on. The paper will gradually break down in the ground.

You will need:

- Newspaper
- Bottle (tomato sauce bottle or similar)
- Pair of scissors
- Soil
- Seed / cutting

Instructions:

1. Use your bottle as a guide to see where you should cut the newspaper. Place the bottle just more than halfway on the paper. You can cut several pages each time.
2. Wrap the paper around the bottle



3. Using your fingers, fold excess paper towards bottom of bottle and flatten
 4. Carefully remove pot from bottle. If you look inside the pot the bottom will be raised. Use fingers or knuckles to press bottom flat.
 5. Fill your pot with soil (This is what makes the pot steady. Without soil it will disintegrate in a few second.)
 6. Plant your seeds, giving them a little water.
 7. Make a label to remind you what seed is in your pot.
- When your seeds have grown and you are ready to plant them into the garden – plant the seeds in the little pot – this will provide some compost while it is growing!

Or you could use old egg shells



Songs and



snack



Physical activities:

What you need:

- a large sheet or old newspaper (depending on how big your group is)
 - or you can draw a large circle in the sand if paper is not available
- Take a sheet and lay it flat on the ground. You could also draw a large circle on the ground with a stick. The children must stand on the sheet or circle drawn in the earth – if you have a large group of children, perhaps just select a few to be part of this activity.

Explain that they must imagine they are animals, birds and insects, living in a beautiful place with streams and food. Perhaps ask each child which animal they are in this game.

Notice how close together they are standing.

Slowly fold parts of the sheet over or draw the circle smaller as you tell about what humans do to the natural habitat of animals:

- People decide to build a road (fold over part of sheet, or make the circle smaller)
- They then build housing (fold over part of the sheet, or make the circle smaller)
- They then need a huge shopping mall (fold over part of the sheet, or make the circle smaller)
- They then need a big farm for cattle for them to eat more beef burgers (fold over part of sheet, or make the circle smaller)

Ask the children how they think the animals feel about being squashed together. Is it comfortable? Can they move? Can they breathe?

Did some of them fall off the sheet?

Explain that, sadly, this is what we are doing to animals, we are moving into their land and some of them die because they don't have enough food any more or space to grow.

Discuss that people remove or clear large areas of grassland or forests and related eco-systems.

Often trees are not planted to replace the trees that have been cut down.



Prayer: God you created all things. Thank you for all of nature. Please help us look after what we have and to leave an area in better condition than when we arrived! Please guide us through this week and help us not waste what we have. We love you. Amen.



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

To gain an appreciation for our natural surroundings and the diversity of God's Creation

To encourage our children to provide an environment which encourages plants and wildlife



Attention Grabber: you can use the Genesis 1:11-13 story as for the younger children .



Discussion questions

Why do we need trees?

Why do we need animals?

What does indigenous mean? ([originating or occurring naturally in a particular place; native](#))

Why is it important to grow indigenous plants? ([Restoring native plant habitat is vital to preserving biodiversity. ... Native plants are those that occur naturally in a region in which they evolved. They are the ecological basis upon which life depends, including birds and people. Without them and the insects that co-evolved with them, local birds cannot survive.](#))

What would happen if all the plants and animals had to disappear from earth?

What do you think would happen if only humans were to disappear from earth?

Did you know:

- Guess how many plant species there are in the world? No-one knows for sure, although some estimate the number to be about 450 000. Isn't God amazing?!
- Did you know that there are over 1000 kinds of trees in South Africa?

- Did you know that Table Mountain alone has as many plant species as in the U.K?
- Furthermore, did you know that the Cape Fynbos is a totally unique kind of vegetation – it is found nowhere else on earth except in the Cape?!



Craft: follow this link to see how you can make your own compost!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kA3q07paNbE>

what you will need:

2L plastic bottle

Sand from your garden

Food scraps, Plant scraps, Paper scraps

Scissors,

Spray bottle

Drawing pin

Tray

How you make it:

1. Rinse your plastic bottle and take off any labels
2. Cut the top off the bottle
3. Pierce the bottom of the bottle with the drawing pin for drainage and put on a tray
4. Now take the sand and place it inside your bottle
5. Then add your shredded paper and plant scraps like leaves or grass cuttings
6. Spray a little water inside your bottle
7. Now add any food scraps.
8. Mix this all up.
9. You can use the top of the bottle that you cut as a lid (upside down) which can be used as a funnel when you water your compost which you should do often
10. Keep in a warm sunny space. You need to mix and water often and can add more food/plant /paper scraps as time goes on.



Songs:



Physical activities:

Trees and squirrels

In groups of 3, 2 children are the trees. They face each other and hold hands. They lift their hands up like a bridge. 1 child is the squirrel. When the squirrel comes 'home' to the tree the children lower their arms and close the squirrel inside.

The teacher then says time to find a home and the trees lift their arms and the squirrel finds a new tree. The can either run or walk. Last group is then 'out' but to keep the game going they will then all turn into squirrels. The last group standing is the winner!

To make this game more fun you can add music. When the music stops the squirrels need to be with their trees.



Prayer: God you created all things. Thank you for all of nature. Please help us look after what we have and to leave an area in better condition then when we arrived! Please guide us through this week and help us not waste what we have. We love you amen.

GAUTENG VEGETABLE PLANTING CHART

To find charts for your area visit [seedsforafrica](http://seedsforafrica.com) online.

Print out copies for your class so they can grow their own veggies at home in the right season!

Vegetable Planting Chart

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Beans (Broad)				█	█							
Beans (Bush)	█							█	█	█	█	█
Beans (Climbing)								█	█	█	█	█
Beetroot	█	█	█	█				█	█	█	█	█
Broccoli	█	█										█
Brussel Sprouts	█	█										
Cabbage	█	█									█	█
Carrot								█	█	█	█	
Cauliflower	█	█										█
Celery								█	█	█	█	█
Corn									█	█	█	
Cucumber									█	█	█	█
Eggfruit (Brinjal)												
Lettuce	█	█	█					█	█			
Melons									█	█	█	
Onion		█	█									
Parsnip									█	█		
Peas							█	█	█			
Peppers								█	█	█		
Potatoes							█	█	█	█		
Pumpkin									█	█	█	
Radish		█	█	█				█	█	█	█	
Swiss Chard / Spinach	█	█	█	█				█	█	█	█	█
Tomato								█	█	█	█	
Watermelon									█	█	█	

Renew: eco-justice

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Isaiah 24:1-6; Matt 8:23-27

Theme: Justice for the earth

Memory verse: The earth mourns and withers, and lies polluted under its inhabitants for they have broken the laws (Isa 24:4-5) OR Even winds and sea obey him (Matt 8: 27)



Information for the teacher:

The earth is not just inanimate with no feelings. The earth actually cries out when it is hurt. The earth has feelings. In the gospel reading the wind and sea obey Jesus. They respond to God. The earth is a wonderful, beautiful place but even in biblical times the people were polluting the earth. And in those days, there were not as many people so the impact was not as severe – but even then, the earth felt the abuse. Today things are much worse.

During this season of creation, we have tried to help the children be more aware of the earth, and of their environment as a place that has feelings, that can be hurt and destroyed or cared for and loved. Eco justice involves justice for all the living beings on the earth – the plants, animals and human beings. We care for all. The resources of the earth are given to everyone and everything. It is not right that a few have so much at the expense of others and of the environment.

We will be using an adaption of a Disney story ‘Moana’ to illustrate the importance of keeping the “heart of the earth” whole, happy and where it should be. If the earth is cared for, things will be good. If the earth is pillaged and harmed, all manner of things will go wrong.

There are many organisations working to preserve the environment and to protect the earth and the seas. In the Johannesburg Diocese there is JAEI and SAFCEI is a faith community environmental initiative. Then there are other organisations such as: Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund. You might like to look at some of the activities and goals of these organisations and consider possible involvement with them.



Lesson Suggestions:

Lesson Objectives:

- To be conscious of the earth as having feelings and being loved and cared for by God.
- To be aware of ways in which we take from (plunder) the earth
- To begin to think of ways to give back to the earth
- To realise that care for the earth is a Christian prerogative



Attention Grabber:

Do you think there is climate change in South Africa?
Do you know of any places that are not getting enough rain?
Have you heard of places that have had floods? Or droughts?

Use pictures if you have them of these situations where there are climate problems and some of the words from Isaiah.

Who are most likely to suffer if there is climate change? If there are droughts and floods and terrible storms?



Setting the scene:

Take a walk around your church or church garden. Do you see anything that might be hurting the earth or spoiling the environment? (there maybe litter, places where the grass is dying as too many people walk on it, too much paving so there are not enough plants, no trees – point things out to the children and start a discussion).



Bible Story: Isaiah 24:1-6 and Matt 8:23-27

The Isaiah passage tells how human beings are not caring for the earth, how we are exploiting the earth. Contrast this story with the way Jesus is so in tune with nature that even the wind listens to him.

Moana is the daughter of a Polynesian chief. She is called by the ocean to return the heart of Te Fiti. Her grandmother encourages her to take on this mission, she than dies as Moana leaves the reef. However, Moana feels like her grandmother is never far away from her. The adventurous teenager sails out on a daring mission to save her people even though it was forbidden by all to leave the island. During her journey, Moana meets the once-mighty demigod Maui, who guides her in her quest to become a master way-finder. Together they sail across the open ocean on an action-packed voyage, encountering enormous monsters and impossible odds. Along the way, Moana fulfils the ancient quest of her ancestors and discovers the one thing she always sought: her own identity.

How we can relate Moana's story to our own Christian lives: we are called by God to take on adventures that may seem difficult and maybe even impossible. God is always with us guiding us to where we need to be. God also gives us a consoler, The Holy Spirit, to encourage and

strengthen us when we feel like we cannot go on any longer. Through all our adventures we discover who we really are and learn skills along the way. This is just like the story of Moana. She was called by the ocean (God) and was guided by it. The Holy Spirit presented itself in the form of her grandmother, she was given encouragement and strength in her moment of weakness. Along our journey we meet people who have a purpose in our lives. Maui was that person for Moana. He taught her how to sail and encouraged her to be brave. Maui was placed in Moana's life as he needed someone to help him understand himself and teach him new things. They were then able to defeat their inner demons and restore the heart of Te Fiti.

Moana

This is a modern-day story that is based on the Walt Disney film Moana. It is based on a Polynesian myth. We use it here to help illustrate the need to care for the earth.

The heart of Te Fiti, an island goddess, was stolen by a demi-god Maui, who wanted to present it as a gift to humanity. Te Fiti's heart was a small luminous stone, which had the power to create life. Maui steals it, but as he flees the island with the stone, he is attacked by a lava monster, Te Ka, causing the stone to fall from his hand and disappear into oblivion.

When it was stolen, problems arose on the island, the fishermen were unable to catch any fish and their crops failed. The islands around them also slowly began to fade away and fall into disrepair because of the curse caused by Maui when he stole the heart of Te Fiti.

A millennium later, Moana, an adventurous teenager, has the responsibility of becoming the next chief of the island. But the fish disappeared from the shores of the village, and the coconuts spoiled. Moana sets sail on a daring mission to save her people and the island and to return the heart stone to the island.

She is very close to her wise grandmother, Gramma Tala. Gramma Tala supports Moana in her quest. When Moana finds all the fish gone she insists on going beyond the reef to catch more, but her father does not want her to do this as his closest friend went sailing there once and was lost. Moana with the support of Gramma Tala goes sailing across the reef into dangerous waters. But she is shipwrecked. Gramma Tala finds her on the beach and shows Moana a secret cave hidden behind a waterfall. Inside are the sailboats of her ancestors. Tala then gives Moana the heart of Te Fiti after showing her the curse draining life away from trees and the island itself, saying that she must return the heart to Te Fiti as it is the only way to save the island.

Moana departs using one of the sailboats found in the cave. Heihei, a rooster goes with her. She seeks to find Maui, but a wave flips her sailboat and knocks her unconscious. She wakes up the next morning on a small island inhabited by Maui, who traps Moana in a cave after distracting her with a tune. He steals her sailboat while threatening to eat Heihei. After escaping the cave, the ocean sends Moana back on the sailboat to convince Maui. She shows him the heart and asks him to help her return it. At first Maui fears this is a trap but then he agrees to help bring the heart back to Te Fiti. They have a number of adventures as they seek to return the heart to the island. They encounter enormous monsters and impossible odds. The two become friends as she learns more on how to be a way finder. They arrive at Te Fiti where the monster, Te Ka appears and tries to destroy them. Maui fights back while telling Moana to go back. She ignores him and Te Ka sends them far back across the ocean. Out of anger, Maui leaves Moana stranded. He tells her that the ocean chose the wrong person to save her people which is something she has been trying to find out why.

She learns that Maui has stolen the heart for a village that he has looked after once he was given his powers from the gods. After sadly telling the ocean to bring the heart to someone else, Gramma Tala appears as a spiritual manta ray and encourages her to find out who she is based on what she has learned, what she has lived through, who she has met, and where she comes from. Moana proudly realizes who she has meant to be within herself, and swims down to retrieve the heart. Using her wayfinding skills, she returns to Te Kā and manages to get past Te Kā to return the heart. Maui returns as well having a change of heart to distract Te Kā. Moana, reaching the top of the mountain, realizes that the island is gone and that Te Kā is actually Te Fiti without her heart. She asks the ocean to clear a path. She connects with Te Fiti and opens her eyes to show her what she has become. Te Fiti calms down and lets Moana restore her heart which restores everything. Te Fiti, is now fully restored and the curse lifted and Moana becomes the new chief. Maui apologizes for his actions and returns to his people.



Discussion and questions:

- What makes Moana such a strong character?
- There were problems of no fish and failed crops on the island. What are some problems facing us? (palm oil, water wastage, plastic, deforestation, pollution etc.)
- The ocean calls Moana to restore the heart of the island. Who or what calls us to restore the earth?
- Moana faced many difficulties. What challenges do we face in caring for the earth?
- Moana chose responsibility over desire? What would this mean for us? What do we understand by this?
- Moana followed her calling despite objections? Do we follow what we know is right despite pressures?
- Moana defied her father, but had the support of her grandmother. Are there lessons we can learn from this? (We need to respect elders (Gran) even if we challenge some elders – we should not go it all alone).
- She learnt from her mistakes. Do we? (Successes can't be achieved without failure)
- Moana restored the heart of the earth? What is that for us?

In what ways was Moana Christlike?

How is Moana like Christ?

- Allows the ocean to guide her
- Loves those who are different
- Wise
- Has empathy
- Endangered herself for the greater good.
- She is innocent
- She connected herself to the world.



Craft: Earth Fan.

Take a piece of paper and draw the earth on it. Then concertina fold it to make a fan. This shows represents how the earth is getting hotter. (Make a small fold on one end of the paper and then turn the paper over and fold it again – until all the paper is folded. Then squeeze the bottom together and spread out the top folds to make a fan).

Children can write their own responses to how they will respond to the call to care for the earth – their promise to the earth.



Snack: Something local not made with products that exploit the environment.



Physical Activities:

Clean up of the area - have some rubbish bags and plastic gloves or plastic bags to cover your hands.
And / OR

Paper toss game:

Collect as many old newspapers as possible.

Spilt your group into 2 teams.

Have a line or rope separating the two teams. No one can cross that line.

Give your teams the same amount of newspaper.

Give a certain amount of time, depending on the size of the group and the amount of newspaper, for the teams to crumble up pieces of the newspaper into balls.

Once the time is up, have the group leave the paper where it is and have them move backwards a few spaces.

When you yell GO the teams run up to paper balls and try throw it over the line to the other team.

The point of this part of the game is try and get as many paper balls into the other team's side before time is up. They can pick up and throw until time is up.

Once time is up, have everyone stop and see who won that round. You can add more rounds.

The last round each team needs to clean up by throwing away all the paper balls into a rubbish bin or bag.



Prayer: Dear God. Help me to be aware of the environment and the beauty of what you have created and help me to care for all living things, including the earth, plants and animals.

Walk around again as a prayer walk – stop and pray for situations, for water, plants, dry and dusty



David, a king of Israel, who loved God

Twenty first Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: 1 Samuel 17

Theme: Relationship with God

Memory verse: "God does not look at the things people look at. People look at outward appearances, but God looks at the heart." 1 Sam 16:7



Information for teacher

The people of Israel asked for a king so that they could be like other nations. Saul was chosen as the first king of Israel. He successfully led the Israelites into many battles against their enemies, the Philistines. After a while, however, Saul started to disobey God's laws. Maybe kingship went to his head and he started to abuse his powers. God told Samuel that Saul's kingdom would not endure and that a man called David would be the next king of Israel.

Born in 1040 BC, halfway between Abraham and Jesus, David became the leader of all Israel. He was the youngest son of Jesse. The prophet Samuel anointed him to be king. In Hebrew the name David means "beloved." David united the fractured kingdom and the 12 tribes of Israel and established Jerusalem as the capital. He brought the Ark of the Covenant back to the tabernacle. David reigned for 40 years.

The bible contains much about David – more is written about him than any other character in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there are sixty-six chapters written about David and in the New Testament there are fifty-nine references to him. We read about David's life in 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles. There are many stories about David that highlight his charisma and emphasise his relationship with God. He is known as the greatest king of Israel as he united the two kingdoms, but there were also times when he did wrong, harmed and killed others and when he failed to uphold justice especially for the poor and the vulnerable. However, despite these failings David loved God and God's law and he sought to follow it and admitted he was wrong when he failed. He meditated, spent time with God and tried to apply God's law to his own life.

For the older children we will look at what it means to be a good leader and to stand up for justice. For the younger children we have the story of David and Goliath with a theme of trusting in God.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the story of David and specifically the story of David and Goliath
- To have courage to challenge things that are wrong even if they seem impossibly big and hard to change.



Attention Grabber: Place a long piece of paper on a wall and measure the height of each child. Our story today involves a giant – a giant is a very tall person – taller than any of us, even our parents! Can anyone guess what our story is for today?



Bible Story: David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

Briefly remind the children of the story we learnt about last week, of how God's people wanted a king, and so God chose Saul. Saul was a good king to begin with, but he started to disobey God, so God asked Samuel to find a new king. The new king would be David.

Ask the children if they know anything about David – they may mention that David was a shepherd and that he beat Goliath; they may also remember that we learnt about David earlier this year when we did a lesson on Psalm 23 and that he played the harp and wrote poems / songs of praise.

Make use of a children's bible to show the children pictures as you tell the story of David and Goliath. If you use the passage below, you may need to use simpler language, depending on your age group.

David and Goliath

Saul was king at this time and he ruled God's people called the Israelites. David and his family were Israelites. The Israelites were not getting on well with people named the Philistines. The Philistines were giants. One of the strongest and biggest giants was named Goliath. He was very tall - taller than any person recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records - he would have needed to bend way down to get through a door!

Goliath was covered with armour to protect him and carried a big spear. Every morning and every evening for forty days he shouted to the Israelites in his big deep voice, "I dare you to find one man to fight me. If he can beat me, we will become your servants, but if I win you will all become our servants."

When Saul and all his men heard this, they were very afraid. Three of these men were David's oldest brothers. David was not allowed to fight because he was not old enough.

David's father Jesse heard about the giant and was worried about his sons. He called David and asked him to take some food to his brothers. So, David set off to visit his brothers.

As he approached them, he heard Goliath shouting his challenge like he did every morning. "I dare you to find one man to fight me."

"Isn't someone going to stand up to this man?" David asked the men in the army. The men in the army said, "No!" –they were too scared. "Then I will fight this giant man," David said.

One of the men overheard this and ran to Saul and told him what David said. Saul said to David, "You can't fight Goliath, you're only a boy and he has been fighting for many years." But David said to Saul, "I have had to fight lions and bears to protect my father's sheep. God helped keep me safe then and he will help keep me safe now."

So Saul dressed David in heavy armour to protect him from Goliath but David took it off. It was so heavy he could hardly walk and he knew that God would keep him from harm. Instead David went to a stream nearby and found five smooth stones, put them in a pouch around his waist, and with his sling he went to Goliath.

As David approached Goliath, Goliath looked at David and thought it was a joke. Goliath thought that he could easily beat David and it was funny that Saul would send a small boy to fight him. But David said to him without fear, "You fight with a sword but I come with God on my side and today everyone will know that there is one true God in this land."

Goliath didn't care what David said and he moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly to meet him. Reaching into his pouch he pulled out a stone, put it into his sling and shot it at Goliath. The stone had hit him right between his eyes and suddenly Goliath started to lose his balance.

He fell with a loud thud right on his face. David had done it, he beat the giant Philistine! When the rest of the Philistines saw this they ran away and David became a hero to all God's people.



Review Questions: Ask the children a few questions, based on the story for today.



Discussion:

1. Did the people think that David would be able to beat Goliath? *(No, because he wasn't trained in combat)*
2. Have you ever been scared of something and faced it anyway?
3. Did you ask for God's help?
4. Why do you think David chose to fight Goliath?
5. What gives you courage?
6. The Bible tells us that everyone was scared of Goliath except for David. Why was David not scared? *(He trusted that God would help him)*
7. God chose David to be the next king. Why? *(David trusted God to help him. David also loved God and praised God in all he did. God didn't look at his outside appearance - God looked at his heart.)*



Prayer: Dear God. We thank you that you are so strong and so mighty. When we feel weak help us to rely on your strength. Amen



Craft:

1. Draw a picture of something that makes you scared using chalk. Draw on the floor or somewhere that the chalk can be wiped off. When we trust in God, we can wipe away things that scare us. We can trust in God.
2. **Make a courage badge or bracelet**
Give the children pieces of cardboard in the shape of a badge or a bangle that will fit around their wrist. They draw things on the cardboard that give them courage, maybe a cross to represent Jesus, or a heart to represent a friend, or their parents etc.



Snack: Rock cakes!



Songs - David loved to sing! Let's sing some songs.



Physical activities:

1. David's bag of stones. Set up stones/ marbles as shown in the diagram below. A child is given 5 stones – the child needs to slide the stone (not throw!) across the floor to try to knock the Goliath stone out of its position. The child has 5 attempts to do this. If the child instead knocks one of the stones with David's name on it, the child is "out" of the game and it is the next child's turn to play this game. The child who is able to knock out the Goliath stone with the fewest stones is the winner. You can make this game harder by making the children slide the stones greater distances.



2. Pin the stone on Goliath. This game is similar to "pin the tail on the donkey". The outline of a person can be stuck on the wall, with an X marked on the forehead. Each child would be given a round piece of paper to represent a stone, and prestik attached to it. The child would then be blindfolded and the aim of the game would be for the child to put the "stone" as close to the X as possible. To make the game more difficult, spin the child around a few times before she/he attempts to put the stone on the X.



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the life of David
- To be aware of the importance of being truly sorry and making amends if we do wrong and hurt someone.
- To understand repentance
- To have courage to challenge things that are wrong even if they seem impossibly big and hard to change.
-



Attention Grabber: Today we are learning about David, one of the most well-known characters of the Bible. When you think of David, what images or words spring to mind? *(He was a poet – he wrote the psalms; he played the harp; he was a shepherd; he beat the giant Goliath; he would become Israel's next king.)*

Two truths and a lie

You tell the children 3 things. Two of them are true and one is a lie. They have to try and decide which is a lie and which are true.

(Saul didn't admit to his mistakes and David did – and so found favour with God.)



Bible Story: Samuel anoints David as king (1 Sam 16)

Ask the children what they remember of the lesson from last week – the story of Saul. Important points to highlight are:

- The people of God wanted a king.
- God chose Saul to be Israel's first king.
- Saul was everything the people wanted in a king – he was handsome and stood head and shoulders above all other men, and led the Israelites into many battles.
- At first Saul obeyed God, but then he started to move away from God and do things his own way.
- God sent Samuel to tell Saul to return to God, but Saul did not.
- The spirit of the Lord then left Saul.

In today's Bible story we will learn that God told Samuel to anoint a new king:

The anointing of David as King (1 Sam 16)

Saul had been king, but he kept disobeying God so God asked Samuel to find a new king. God said to Samuel, "Go to Bethlehem where there is a man named Jesse with eight sons. One of them will be the next king."

When Samuel first met the sons he automatically thought that the oldest son named Eliab would be the king that God had chosen. But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at the way he looks or his height. Eliab is not the one I have chosen. "People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Jesse brought more of his sons to meet Samuel but none of them God had chosen either. Samuel asked Jesse, "Have I met all your sons?" Jesse replied, "I have one son left named David, he's the youngest, and he's out looking after the sheep. I will bring him here to meet you."

As soon as Samuel saw David the Lord spoke to him and said, "He is the one." So, Samuel anointed him with oil which was a special way of promising him that he would be the next king. And from that day on the power of the Lord was with David.



Review Questions: Ask the children a few questions, based on the story for today.

1. Why do you think God chose David to be the next king of Israel? *(Read 1Sam 16:7b – “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” This story reminds us that it doesn’t matter what you look like on the outside – how old you are; the colour of your eyes; or if you have disabilities; or even how others see you. What is more important is how we look on the inside – God looks at our heart. God said that David was a man after God’s own heart, and so even though David was very young, God took David from being a simple shepherd boy, to shepherding the whole of Israel!)*
2. Discuss with the children that David accomplished many things as King of Israel.
 - David took the fractured kingdom that Saul had left behind and built a strong, united power - He united the northern and southern kingdoms, bringing the 12 tribes together under the name of Israel for the first time.
 - He conquered and established Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.
 - David reigned as king for 40 years
3. When we think of a leader what characteristics should they have? *(leadership, integrity, gratitude, empathy, faith, courage, respect etc)*
4. Does it matter how they look?
5. What do you think God sees in your heart when Gods ‘looks at the heart’?



Application questions:

Do you think you have been chosen by God? (everyone is special to God, so in that sense yes you have been chosen)

If you were chosen to be the leader or the president of the country, what would you do and why?

How do we remind ourselves that we are special to God?

What great things do you think you could only accomplish with God?



Craft

Make a badge for yourself and on it write the characteristics you would like to have in your life.



Prayer: Use an open form of prayer today, where the children can contribute, based on the lesson for today.

The following verses from Psalm 139 can be used to end the prayer:

“Search me O Lord, and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.”

Psalm 139:23-24



Snack: rock cakes!



Physical activities: See the younger children’s section for some fun ideas

Ring Leader

Everyone sits in a circle. Put someone in the middle and they have to guess who is starting the action (the ring leader). To start the game, send someone out of the room while you select who is going to be the ring leader. Then bring the person back in and put them in the center of the ring. The ring leader starts an action. The person gets three guesses to identify the ring leader. A good game as no materials needed, and it involves everyone.



Songs - David loved to sing! Let’s praise and love God as David did!

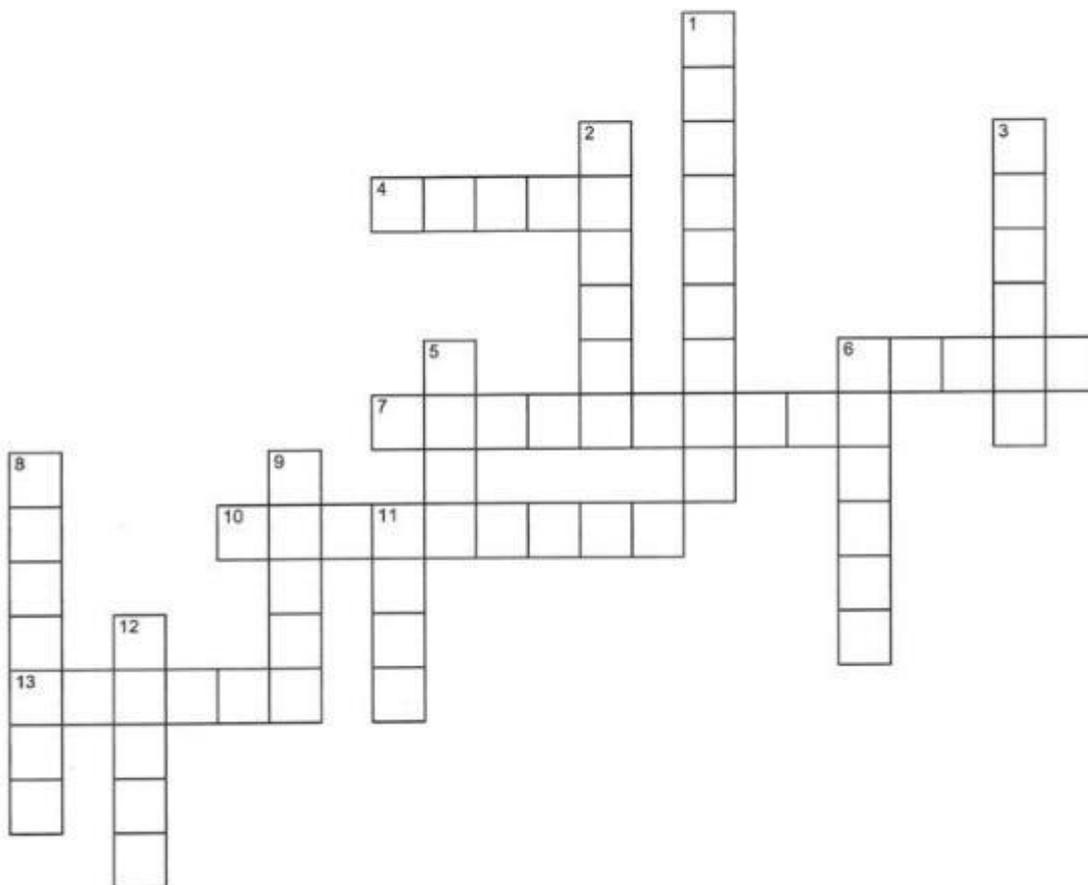


Worksheet: See cross word at end of lesson

Answers: Across: 4. Jesus 6. seven. 7. Bathsheeba 10. Bethlehem. 13. anoint

Down: 1. Jerusalem 2. Psalms 3. Samuel 5. Saul 6. Samuel 8. Goliath 9. heart 11. harp 12. forty

David



Across:

4. A relative of David whose name means the “anointed one” and who would be called the King of Kings
6. How many brothers did David have?
7. David married this woman
10. The town from which David came
13. The word we use in the church for pouring holy oil on someone’s head to set them apart for a special job

Down:

1. David established this city as the capital of Israel
2. David wrote many poems which can be found in this book of the Bible
3. The story of David can be found in the book of _____
5. The first King of Israel
6. The person who anointed David as King
8. As a young boy, David won a battle against this giant
9. Humans look at the outward appearance but God looks at the _____ (1 Sam 16:7)
11. The musical instrument that David played
12. The number of years David rules as King of Israel

Anointing of David

J	Z	M	X	C	A	Q	E	G	A	R	U	O	C	Z	Z	U	D	Y	W	M	B	W
T	H	M	E	D	U	T	I	T	A	R	G	F	V	Y	G	Y	X	I	R	S	O	Q
D	X	P	X	U	J	F	E	D	Q	I	Y	Z	Y	O	U	N	G	E	S	T	P	N
C	S	M	Z	Z	J	M	M	U	N	N	P	E	E	H	S	N	Q	U	P	O	Y	H
L	W	A	E	V	L	U	B	K	E	H	Q	P	Q	P	J	N	V	A	X	A	T	T
C	E	L	U	M	H	E	D	I	V	A	D	O	R	B	V	U	S	M	I	N	I	G
D	Z	Z	U	L	R	J	A	H	F	E	L	J	X	O	Q	R	W	S	R	O	R	E
B	B	E	X	N	G	A	O	D	S	H	V	W	P	P	M	L	T	E	G	I	G	H
H	B	F	M	H	L	M	N	A	E	O	W	T	U	S	L	I	J	H	C	N	E	T
K	T	C	Z	P	W	C	D	E	U	R	S	V	B	R	E	L	S	W	Y	T	T	I
J	H	Z	I	X	A	B	O	J	A	E	S	V	X	B	B	E	D	E	Q	I	N	A
W	H	F	P	R	T	T	A	Q	O	M	U	H	P	A	K	U	F	H	U	N	I	F
Q	Q	A	X	Z	T	I	H	E	F	C	J	X	I	Y	Z	M	D	L	M	G	S	S
C	K	U	M	I	M	K	J	Y	R	Z	X	F	C	P	L	A	F	G	G	N	V	D
W	N	T	R	A	E	H	D	Y	R	E	S	P	E	C	T	S	Q	J	C	I	W	J
P	Q	L	C	F	T	N	K	L	J	K	I	N	G	C	O	G	L	I	O	E	P	G

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden     and .

ANOINTING
COURAGE
DAVID
EMPATHY
FAITH
GRATITUDE

HEART
INTEGRITY
KING
LEADERSHIP
OIL
PROMISE

RESPECT
SAMUEL
SAUL
SHEEP
YOUNGEST

References:

Life Application Bible: New International Version, Tyndale Publishers and Zondervan Publishers, 1991

www.dtlk-bible.com

craftingthewordofgod.com

David Makes a Mistake!

Twenty second Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: 2 Samuel 12 in the light of 2 Samuel 11 (David and Bathsheba)

Theme: *Repentance and making amends when we do wrong*

Memory verse: *Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause*



Information for teacher

This lesson looks at how lies and keeping secrets can affect others as well as ourselves. David was a King who was very used to getting whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted it. In this story he took Bathsheba against her will. How could she object to the King of Israel?! He also used violence to get his own way to get rid of her husband.

This lesson may lead into the topic of Gender Based Violence and teachers should be cautious with each age group. If a child reveals that he or she is a victim of violence please report it to appropriate authorities.

David was human, and there were those dark times when he stumbled and fell into sin. Most notably we read of his sin with Bathsheba and how he tried to cover his sin by having her husband killed. And yet he remained in relationship with God. So, what does it mean to have a relationship with God? David humbled himself, publicly confessed his sin by wearing sackcloth, and acknowledged that he had done wrong.

Nathan was a prophet during the reigns of King David and King Solomon, providing counsel to the kings. Nathan appears in the Bible on at least four occasions. The first time Nathan is mentioned in the Bible is in [2 Samuel 7:1-2](#) Nathan is called "Nathan the prophet," or, in Hebrew, Nathan the "*Nabi*." A prophet's job was to proclaim a message given to them from God.

This lesson focuses on how Nathan was sent to David and rebuked him for his sinful actions regarding Bathsheba and her husband. It looks at the importance of admitting when we have done wrong and asking for forgiveness. It also encourages us to stand up to those who do wrong even if it is difficult. We will see that David's actions had consequences. However, this lesson is not about God punishing those who sin. Rather God helps us learn from our mistakes, sometimes our mistakes can turn into very difficult lessons!

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To know that David made mistakes and did not respect Bathsheba's privacy.
- To recognise that lying is bad.
- To learn the importance of repenting and saying sorry.



Attention Grabber: make use of a merit board.

Make a poster for David in the style of a merit and demerit board.

Ask the children to add merits (good things) they think David has done. You can add a sticker next to each merit

E.g., David loves God, David looked after his country, David brushed his teeth, David washed his hands (make it very relatable).

Then add demerits (bad things). You can add a black dot next to each demerit.

E.g., David saw a lady bathing and didn't give her privacy, David lied, David made a friend drunk, David got a friend killed, David didn't listen to God, David didn't make his bed etc

Show that even a king can make mistakes but that doesn't make it okay.



Bible Story: David and Nathan (2 Samuel 12: 1-9 and 13)

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When Nathan came to David, Nathan said, "There were two men in a city. One man was rich, but the other was poor. ²The rich man had very many sheep and cattle. ³But the poor man had nothing except one little female lamb he had bought. The poor man fed the lamb. It grew up with him and his children. It shared his food and drank from his cup. It slept in his arms. The lamb was like a daughter to him.

"Then a traveller stopped to visit the rich man. The rich man wanted to give food to the traveller. But he didn't want to take one of his own sheep or cattle to feed the traveller. Instead, he took the lamb from the poor man. The rich man killed the lamb and cooked it for his visitor."

⁵David became very angry at the rich man. He said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this should die! ⁶He must pay for the lamb four times for doing such a thing. He had no mercy!"

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I appointed you king of Israel. I saved you from Saul. ⁸I gave you his kingdom and his wives. And I made you king of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you even more. ⁹So why did you ignore the Lord's command? Why did you do what he says is wrong? You killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites! And you took his wife to become your wife!

¹³Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."



Discussion:

1. How did you feel when you heard the story?
2. Were you also very cross with the rich man who took the poor man's lamb?

3. Do you know of people who do that sort of thing today?
4. Can you imagine how scared Nathan must have been to tell David that he had been bad?
5. Have you ever done something wrong and your friend told you? Where they nice about it? Did you say sorry?
6. Are you afraid to tell a friend or a sibling that they did something wrong?
7. What gives you courage?
8. Remember when David beat Goliath? He wasn't scared because he had God with him. Do you feel that God is with you when you are scared? Does that make you feel braver?
9. God forgave David for everything that he did because he 'repented'. Repent means to say sorry and really mean it. When we have been naughty God doesn't want us to cover it up like David did but to say sorry. Why? (*because God loves us so so much! God doesn't want us to sin and hurt ourselves and our friends. God wants us to tell the truth!*)

This story reminds us that we should always stand up for what is right even if it's our best friend who we need to tell. We should tell them so that they can be better people.



Prayer: Dear Lord God. Thank you for always being with us, even during the scary times. Help us to remember that you can make us brave! Help us to do what is right. We love you lots! Amen.



Craft:

1. Spiderweb of lies.

What you need

- A paper plates
- Kokis or colouring pencils
- String and or a dark colour Koki

What you do:

- On the paper plate have each child draw their face.
- Then age dependant- if they are very little tell them to draw a line from one side of the plate to another. This represents a lie told. And them do it a few times
- If they are older than thread string instead of drawing lines.

Tell them:

The more lies we tell he harder it is for us to see clearly or for others to see us for who we really are.

2. Super hero cuffs.

Nathan was like a super hero because he stood up to those who did wrong. He did it even though he may have been very scared! Sometimes we need a reminder to be brave and do what's rights so today we will make cuffs that super heroes wear!

They go around your wrists and when you lose your courage you can be reminded by looking at them that God is with you!

What you need:

2 toilet paper rolls per child.

Scissors

Decorations. (stickers, colour pencils, ribbons, glue is necessary etc)

What you do:

Cut the toilet paper roll long ways and open it gently.

Decorate your cuff to help you be brave and remind you that Gold will hold your hand through any difficult time.

Put them on.

You can play around being brave super heroes!



Physical activities:

Colour game:

What you need is a bunch of coloured pencils or crayons

What you do:

This is similar to the game 'Pick up sticks'

hold all of the coloured pencil in your hand and drop them

They will fall randomly and that is great.

Each child takes a turn pulling a pencil from the pile

You cannot make any other sticks move or you lose your turn and do not get to collect the stick.

The player with the most sticks at the end of the game wins.

3. But for each colour they have to answer a question!

Red: what or who do you love?

Blue: what or who makes you scared?

Green: what makes you jealous?

Yellow: when do you say sorry?

Pink/ purple: what do you like most about God?

Brown/ orange: any question!

4. Physical activities: Human rock paper scissors or David, Bathsheba and the lion

This is played exactly like rock, paper, scissors except rock is David swinging his sling, paper is Bathsheba (can make up a girly movement) and scissors is the lion makes a scary face.

David beats the lion (rock)

The lion beat Bathsheba (as it scares her away) (scissors)

Bathsheba beats David (paper)

***boys can be Bathsheba and girls can be David just like they can be rock or scissors!**



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about of David and Bathsheba
- To understand that we can't hide from sin.
- To learn about the importance of repenting.



Attention Grabber: ripple effect

What you need is a bowl of water and a small object.

Show the class the bowl of water. It must be still. Tell them that when we make a choice and or an action it's like us dropping the object in the water (drop the object in the water)

See how the water is affected. How its ripples from the object outwards. Every bit of the water was moved. This is the same with our actions good and bad. What we do affects others around us!



Bible Story: David and Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11 and follow on with chapter 12

David was a great king, but when he wanted something, he removed all obstacles to get what he wanted and this caused him to do wrong and to hurt a number of people. The prophet Nathan showed David what he had done wrong. He told David the story of a wealthy man who had many sheep yet stole the very special and only sheep that a poor man had. David realised how bad he had been and he repented, wearing sackcloth and ashes – so that everyone knew he was sorry.



Review Questions: Ask the children a few questions, based on the story for today. Choose the ones you like.

1. What was David's first mistake? (watching Bathsheba bath). Talk about the importance of our privacy. How would they feel if they found out this happened to them?
2. David decided he wanted more of Bathsheba. Was there anything she could have done to resist him? (He was an all-powerful king).
3. What did Bathsheba's husband do? (he was a soldier in the king's army)
4. David got Bathsheba pregnant. How did he cover up this mistake? (David sent her husband to the front lines to fight and there he was killed. David then married Bathsheba (2 Sam 11))
5. Have you ever made a mistake and tried to cover it up? What happened? Were other people effected by your choices?
6. Have you ever felt like Bathsheba? She was forced into this situation with David, because how could she say no to the King? How do you think it would feel?
7. Have you ever been like David and forced someone to do something they don't really want to do? Why did you do it? Is that nice?
8. David has shown us that people have used violence to cover up their tracks. We have heard a lot about Gender based violence. Do you think David committed the crime of gender-based violence?
9. We don't have to keep quiet when we hear or see and feel gender-based violence. What can we do? Who should we talk to?
10. The prophet Nathan came to David and told him the story of a rich man who had many sheep and yet he stole the lamb from a poor family. What are your thoughts and feelings on this story?
11. Nathan was a clever man. He knew that he couldn't just walk up to King David and shout at him, he had to make him feel, he had to use Davids emotions for him to understand. Sometimes when we get very angry or very sad we don't always know why. Here we need to take a breath and say to ourselves 'ok, hold on! Why I am I feeling this way. Is it because of (example) or (an example) of what happened yesterday? Am I angry because of what someone did or said? But reacting like this, will it make things better?'

12. Nathan must have been so mad! But because he was calm when he spoke to David, David was able to look at his sins and repent. What does repent mean? How do we repent?
13. When David heard this story, he understood what a terrible thing he had done. How did David show his repentance? *(He said he was sorry, he refused to eat or drink and lay on a hard floor for days hoping God would change Gods mind)*
14. He truly repented and he tried to make amends. In this way his relationship with God was restored. His sin was forgiven. However, we must live with the consequences of our actions! Sometimes our actions affect other people very badly! David's actions not only affected himself, they affected God and how people respected God, they affected Bathsheba in many ways and his actions affected a little baby.

Link back to the attention grabber. When we do something wrong it affects others, when we apologise, we also cause a ripple.



Craft: Forgiveness Erases Wrong

You will need:

- Glue and/or tape; paper or cardboard paper Scissors
- Caption or verse (Optional)
- Kokis or crayons; Pencils with erasers
- decorations (optional)

what to do:

1. Cut the paper into a heart shape.
2. Decorate the heart with verses, stickers, colors, or other items as desired.
3. Cut a slit in the back of the heart, and insert a pencil with eraser.
4. Give the heart away as a gift, or keep it as a reminder that forgiveness "erases" sins.

3. Draw a picture or write out on the ground in chalk things that you have done wrong. This is saying that you are sorry and confessing your wrong doing. Think if there is anything you can do to make things better. Then wipe it off.

You can also write down any wrong doing that has happened to you. You can ask God to help you through it. If you can forgive it then wipe it off.



Prayer: Use an open form of prayer today, where the children can contribute, based on the lesson for today. The following verses from Psalm 139:23-24 can be used to end the prayer:

"Search me O Lord, and know my heart;
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
See if there is any offensive way in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting."



Physical activities:

Cat and mouse

Have 2 children one as the cat and the other as the mouse.

All the other children make a circle holding hands.

The cat needs to catch the mouse. The children in the circle can decide to let the cat or mouse into or out the circle by lifting their arms like a bridge. If their arms are down no one can get through

To make it harder you can add cats and mice to the game.

Ring Leader

Everyone sits in a circle. Put someone in the middle and they have to guess who is starting the action (the ring leader). To start the game, send someone out of the room while you select who is going to be the ring leader. Then bring the person back in and put them in the centre of the ring. The ring leader starts an action. The person gets three guesses to identify the ring leader.

Or

The human knot

Have everyone stand in a circle. Ask them all to first put their right arm in and take someone's hand opposite them. Then ask them to put their left hand in and take someone else's hand who is roughly opposite them. Now tell them they have to work out how to get untangled. They need to work together and cannot let go of each other! It is possible to become untangled! Remind them that we are all connected. All of our actions can affect other people. We get to choose what kind of actions we wish to make.

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The Book of Psalms

Twenty third Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: *Psalms*

Theme: *Freely and honestly expressing ourselves before God*

Memory verses: *"God hears when I pray to him. "Psalm 4:3*

"I will be glad and rejoice in God's love." Psalm 31:7

"Let them praise God's name with dancing, making melody to God with tambourine and lyre" Psalm 149:5

OR

Maybe the children would like to choose their own verse from their favourite Psalm.



Information for the teacher:

At the centre of the Bible we find the book of Psalms. This is a great collection of songs and prayers that expresses the heart and soul of humanity. It is in these writings that we discover a whole range of human experiences, expressed as the writers honestly pour out their true feelings. In this face-to-face conversation with God the psalmists confess their sins, express their doubts and fears, ask God for help in times of trouble, and sing to God in the heights of celebration. Because of the honesty expressed in the psalms, people throughout the ages have come to the book of psalms and have not only found comfort during times of discouragement, but also a new sense of God's power and concern, and so a renewed faith in God's loving kindness and tender mercy.

The collection of Psalms, consisting of one hundred and fifty separate poems, reflects a long history of at least seven centuries of growth. Originally, the psalms were anonymous poems which were known to the Israelites in an oral form. After they were put down in writing and provided with headings, they were put into separate collections and circulated in that form. This process of growth was concluded by the 2nd century BC.

At least seven different writers contributed to the book of Psalms. Of these King David is credited with the most – at least 73. Other notable psalmists include Solomon, Moses, Asaph, Ethan and the sons of Korah. Forty-eight of the 150 are not attributed to a specific writer.

Research into the Psalms shows that the collection consists of different literary forms such as-**The Song of praise**- A hymn of praise to God, **The Lament**- Complaints about the needs of the nation or the individual, **The song of thanksgiving**- a nation or individual giving thanks to God for help, **Songs about the kingship of the Lord**- expressing that the Lord is king, **Words of blessing and cursing**-these were in the form of a wish or a proposition, **Songs of victory**- sung after a victory in order to give the Lord honour, **Wisdom psalms**-the words of blessing "happy is the .." is usually noted in these, or the idea of all going well for the just and everything ending badly for the godless.

Our lesson for today touches on the different types of Psalms, and encourages us, like the psalmists to openly express our feelings of sadness and joy to God in song, dance and prayer. Let the honesty of the Psalmists guide you into a deep and genuine relationship with God.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

To know that the psalms teach us how to talk to God; David loved music and was a great poet
To feel OK to talk to God whether they are sad, mad, glad or bad and to express their feelings of sadness and joy in song, dance and prayer.



Attention Grabber: We express ourselves and our feelings to God

In preparation for this lesson, draw four round faces that depict a sad, happy, angry, and guilty face. You may want to add other expressions. Start the lesson by singing, dancing and making use of musical instruments or recorded instrumental music that brings about different emotional responses.

Ask the class to identify the emotion of a happy face as they sing and dance, stomp their feet and cross their arms to show anger, or skip playfully as they hear a fast tempo piece of music; you may even swing them in a blanket to peaceful or calming music, and so on. Link this to the idea that in today's lesson we will learn about talking to God, whether we are happy or whether we are sad.



Bible story:

Briefly talk about David, that he was a shepherd, he fought and killed the giant Goliath – he was able to do this because he trusted in God; David became king, he made mistakes but he repented and said sorry to God.

Did you know that David loved music? – He played the harp. He also liked to write poems and songs – these poems and songs tell us about David's life and his feelings –some of his songs are sad and some are happy.

For the slightly older children, mention that David's poems and songs can be found in the book of Psalms – a book found in the Old Testament of the Bible. Some of them express his repentance and sorrow when he has done wrong.

Does anyone know any of the psalms / poems that David wrote?

We learnt about Psalm 23 earlier this year – this psalm is about David's life as a shepherd. Briefly remind the children of this psalm. At this point, you may want to sing a song such as "The Lord is my shepherd."

Read the following verses which come from the psalms and ask the children whether they think David was happy or sad, or even afraid when he wrote these psalms:

"Clap your hands. Shout to the Lord with joy." Psalm 47:1

"The Lord is my shepherd. I have everything I need." Psalm 23:1

"I call on God when I am scared, and God answers me." Psalm 120:1

"Praise the Lord with the harp; sing to God a new song and shout for joy." Psalm 33:1-3

Sing the following song, helping the children to realise that it is good to express our feelings.

If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands.....
If you're sad and you know it, say "boo-hoo".....
If you're mad and you know it, stamp your feet.....



Discussion (This may only be suitable for the slightly older children)

Did you know that we can write our own psalms? – Our own poems to tell God how we are feeling – let's try to do that now.

Ask the children the following questions:

What would you like to thank God for?

What makes you happy?

What makes you sad?

When are you afraid?

After discussing the responses to these questions, create a psalm for your class, based on the responses given by the children. The psalm should start and end with praise, with the tough answers to life's questions in the middle. This psalm can be the prayer for today's lesson.

Here is a structure you may find useful:

Thank you God for

Hold me tight when I feel sad – when

Please help me feel safe when

Thank you God for

Here is an example of a poem from a 5 year old:

Thank you God, for keeping me safe - I love you.

You made everything here on earth. You are very helpful all around the world. I'm glad you made us.

Thank you God, for making me glad – thank you God for living me and my family.



Craft: David loved music and he played the harp. Today we will make our own musical instrument. Here are instructions on how to make a shaker. Materials required for this are: paper plates, rice, stapler, crayons, stickers, ribbons

1. Children decorate the paper plates, then fold the paper plate in half and staple until almost completely sealed. Put rice through the opening and then complete stapling so that no rice can escape. You can write on the shaker a verse from one of the psalms or simply write "Praise the Lord!"



The children can then spend time playing with the shaker and other musical instruments which may be in the class. You may want to encourage the children to sing a song based on the “psalm” that we wrote or their own song expressing their feelings to God.

2. The second craft is to give the children another way to express their feelings. You’ll need cardboard, and some form of stick (ice-cream sticks work the best) they each get 4 pieces of cardboard and four sticks on each piece of cardboard the children need to draw a different mouth to express a different emotion. So on the first one should be a smiley face, the next should be sad, the next mad and then the last scared.



Songs: Let’s sing and dance as David did! Use songs based on the Psalms such as “The Lord is my shepherd” and “This is the day”. Try to think of other songs that your church is familiar with which are based on the psalms. Make use of the shakers the children have just made as well as other musical instruments.



Worksheets: Worksheets can be found at the end of the lesson. They can colour the pictures in once they have completed the task.



Prayer: Dear God. Thank you that you are always with us. You are with us when we are happy and when we are sad. Thank you for music, singing and dancing!



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

To know that the Psalms are poetic songs that are used to worship God and express feelings.
To feel safe in that they can be honest with their feelings when talking to God.

To Identify the different types of psalms and encourage the children to refer to the psalms to express their feelings. To realise that we too can express our feelings of sadness and joy in song, dance and prayer.



Attention Grabber: Psalm Trivia

Take your bible in your hand and try to open it in the very middle of the bible. What book of the Bible have you found? (*The book of Psalms*)

The mid-point of the Bible is Psalm 118:8. Find this verse in your Bible and read it out.

(If this verse is in the centre of the bible, what does it tell you about who or what should be at the centre of your life?)

Did you know?

There are 594 chapters in the Bible before Psalm 118

There are 594 chapters in the Bible after Psalm 118

Add 594 + 594. What do you get? (*1188 i.e. Psalm 118:8 -Isn't God amazing??!!!*)



Discussion:

The book of psalms is part of a collection of books in the Bible called poetry. Do you know of any other poetry books in the Bible? (*Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.*)

The poems, prayers and hymns found in the psalms were used in the worship services of the ancient Israelites and are still used today in our prayers and worship. As you page through the psalms, you will often be reminded of songs that you are familiar with. (*Here are a few examples of psalms that well-known songs are based on: Psalm 18:1-3; Psalm 42:1; Psalm 46; Psalm 125; Psalm 122; Psalm 137, Psalm 118:24. If you think your children know songs based on these psalms, ask them to find each of these psalms in their bible, and then think of a song based on this psalm. If not, then before the lesson, page through the psalms and find psalms that your children do sing about.*)

Ask the children if they know any of the psalms or if they have a favourite psalm. Which do they think is the most well-known psalm? Do they know who wrote most of the psalms? (*David*)

Many of the psalms written by David refer to specific times in his life. Some of the psalms refer to his time as a shepherd – these are usually psalms of praise and thanksgiving. There are a number of psalms where David writes of his time when he was fleeing from Saul. (Saul had become jealous of David – this began when David returned from his battle with Goliath and the Philistines. David became king and united all 12 tribes of Israel. He reigned as king for 40 years and led his armies to victory over the enemies. David was known as a man after God’s heart. It is also well known that David loved music – he played the harp and used to play for King Saul. Although there is much good to speak of when we mention David, he also did some bad things, such as his relationship with Bathsheba, he truly repented for what he had done wrong by putting on sackcloth. The psalms written during these times are known as psalms of lament, where David cries out to God for help and rescue. Other psalms refer to David’s repentance when David confesses his sins to God.

And so, the psalms give us the opportunity to delve in to David’s thoughts at different times of his life. Listen to the following psalms (or parts of them) and try to determine whether the psalm is one of praise and thanksgiving, fear or repentance. Also try to determine during which time of David’s life each psalm may have been written:

Psalm 23 Psalm 7 or Psalm 59 Psalm 51 Psalm 8 Psalm 9

The collection of songs or poems that make up the book of Psalms includes writings by people who were going through some of the same things you will experience at different times in your life- happiness, fear, sadness, pain, anger and other strong feelings. In the psalms we often find words that echo our own particular circumstances.

It is therefore a good idea to read the psalms so that you might understand that you are not alone, and that other people have felt the same feelings you might be feeling right now. Reading through the Book of Psalms teaches us how to talk to God, whether you are happy with God (the praise psalms), or you don’t get what God is doing (the venting psalms), or you just want to whine (the pain psalms). Most importantly, the people who wrote the psalms were talking to God, and they did this freely and honestly. This is how we should speak to God as well!



Activity ideas:

1. **Writing your own Psalm - Psalm 151**

Ask the children to find Psalm 151 in the bible – they will find that there is no Psalm 151 – there are only 150 psalms! This is therefore a very suitable number for them to write their very own psalm!

We can write our own psalms - poems where we honestly tell God our feelings – let's try to do that now.

Ask the following questions:

What would you like to thank/praise God for?

What makes you happy?

What makes you sad?

When are you afraid?

After discussing the responses to these questions, each child can create his/her own psalm, based on his/her responses. The children may prefer to work in groups.

Once the children have written their own psalm, they can decorate it appropriately. These psalms can form the prayers for today's lesson. If any of the children are musically inclined, they may like to put their psalms to music.

2. Refer the children to a number of well-known psalms such as Psalm 100, Psalm 23, Psalm 42, Psalm 96 – perhaps you have a favourite psalm which you would like to share with your class. The children need to choose their favourite verse from one of these psalms or another psalm with which they are familiar. Each child can then make a banner containing this verse and decorate it appropriately. Encourage the children to learn their favourite verse.



Worksheet: at the end of the lesson



Songs: Many of the Psalms are songs of praise and so today's lesson should include singing, dancing and making use of musical instruments. Try to use songs based on the Psalms such as "The Lord is my shepherd", "This is the day", "



Prayer: May we always come to you in prayer, honestly expressing our true feelings, O Lord. And may we also praise your name with dancing, making melody to you with tambourine and lyre. (Psalm 149:5)
Amen

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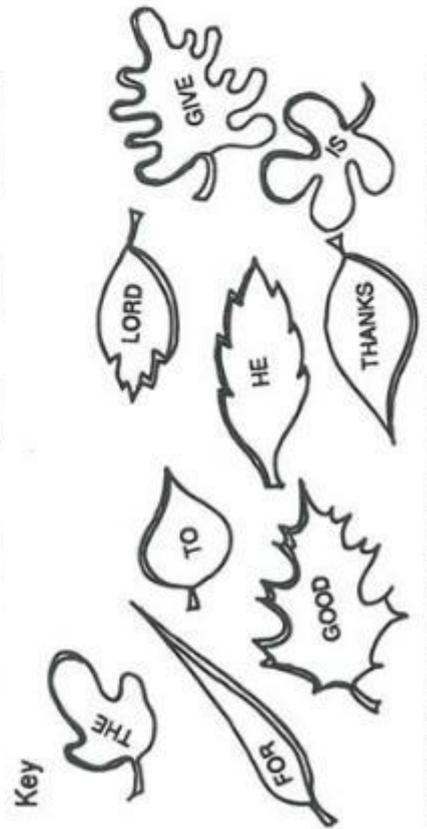
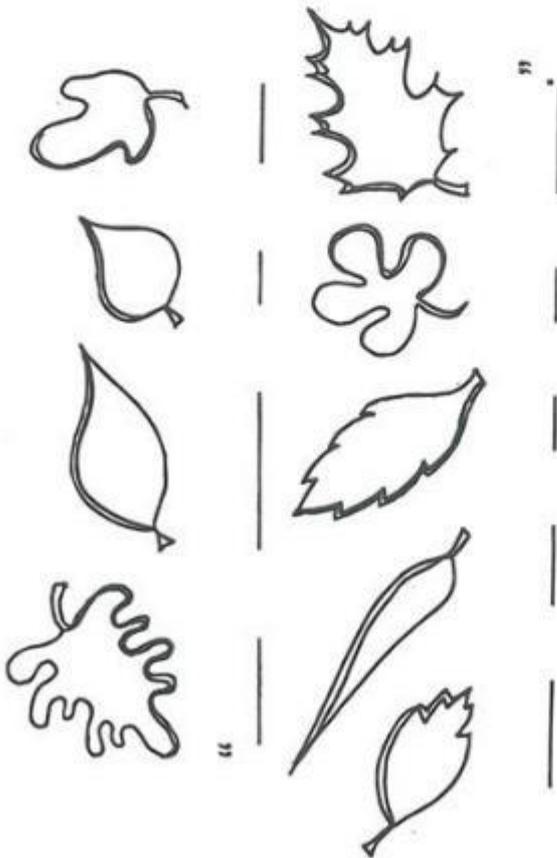
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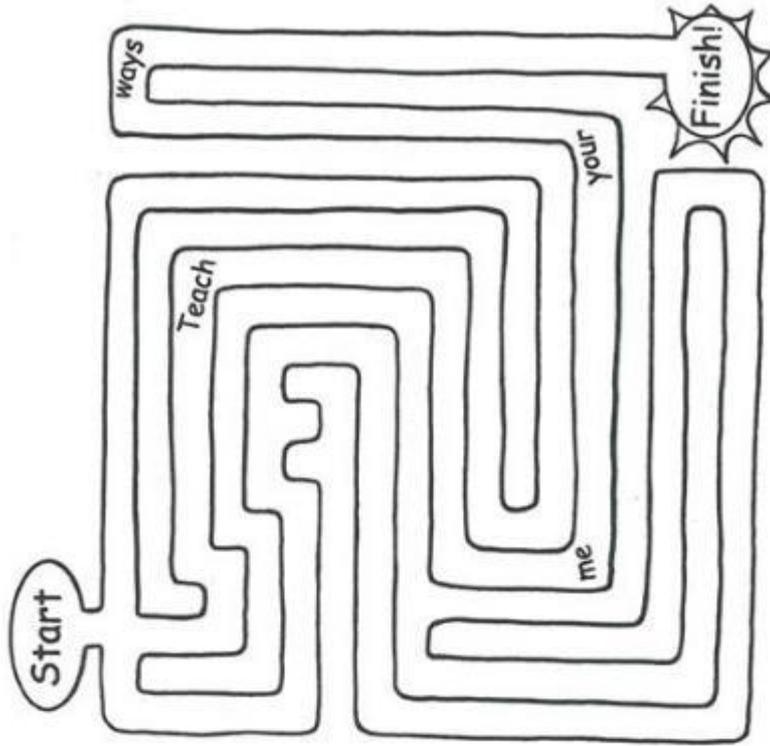
Psalms 107:1

On the line below each leaf write the word that appears in the matching leaf at the top of the page.

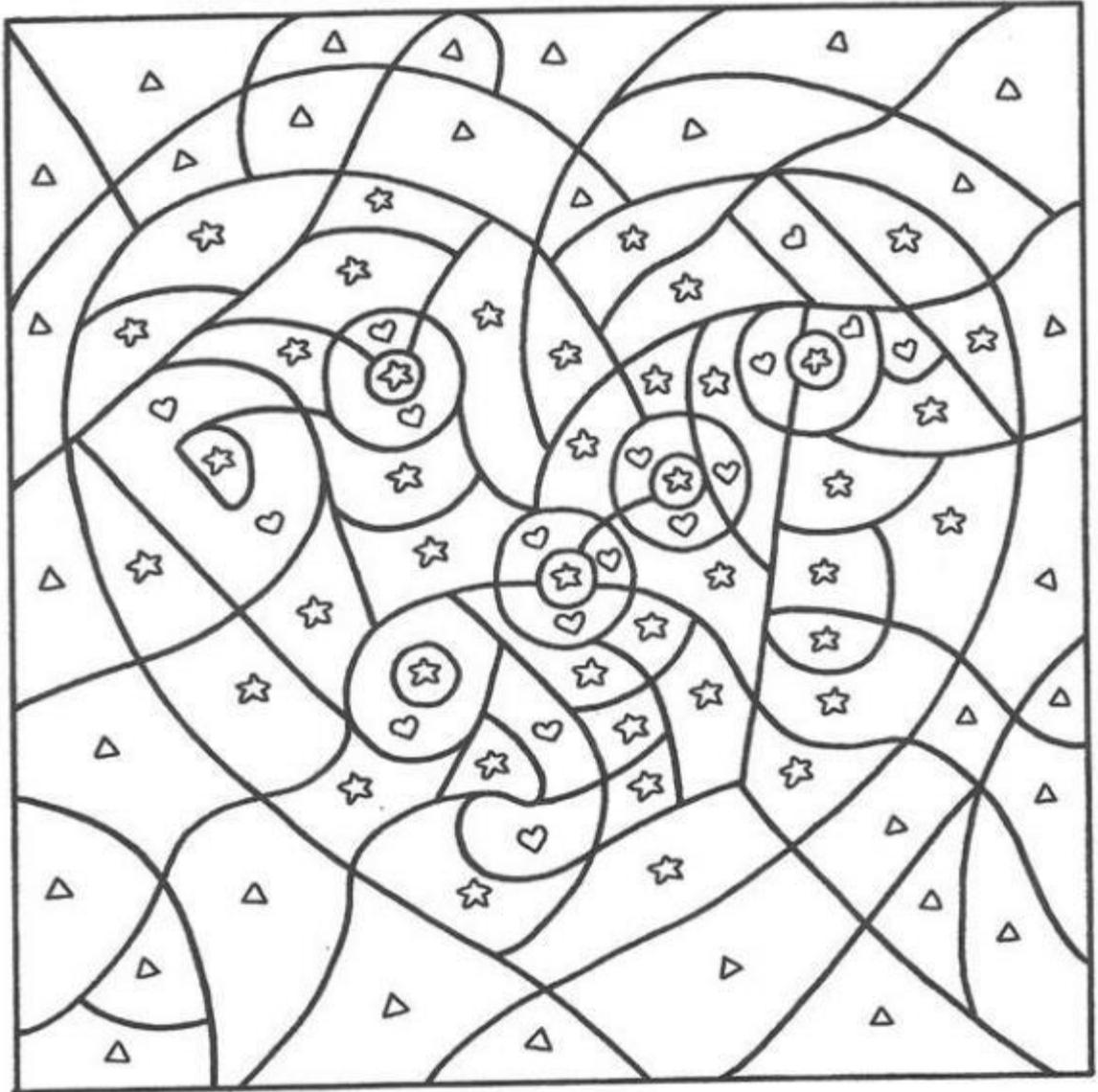


Psalms 27:11

To find out what this psalm says, draw a path through the maze.



Find out what Jesus wants you to do. Color the spaces with ♡s yellow. Color the spaces with ☆s red. Color the spaces with △s blue.



What message did you find? The Bible says, "Stop doing wrong and do good." (See Psalm 34:14.)



What is one good thing you can do to show love for Jesus? Write a sentence about it!

A psalm for every occasion!

Have you ever?

- Wanted to yell and scream about something awful? Read Psalm 13
- Had doubts about who Jesus is? Read Psalm 22
- Needed assurance of God's presence as you go through a rough time? Read Psalm 23:4
- Needed assurance of God's help? Read Psalm 28:7
- Felt so broken hearted, alone and sad? Read Psalm 34:18
- Had something so incredible happen you can't wait to tell everybody? Read Psalm 40
- Felt the need to start again, to "wipe the slate clean" -be forgiven? Read Psalm 51:10
- Felt so fearful and wondered where God is? Read Psalm 56:3
- Felt safe in God's hands? Read psalm 63:7
- Wondered why bad things happen when you're trying to be good? Read Psalm 94:12-15
- Been amazed at God's work in your life: Read Psalm 77:14
- Felt so down as though you have hit rock bottom? Read Psalm 88
- Felt grateful and full of praise: Read Psalm 100
- Been strengthened by God's word? Read Psalm 119:11
- Been confident in God's support and help? Read Psalm 121
- Wondered about God's knowledge and care of you? Read Psalm 139
- Wanted to praise God for all that God has done? Read psalm 147
- Wanted every living creature to praise God? Read Psalm 150
- Wanted to know that God is in control? Read Psalm 146





Saints and superheroes

All Saints Day (Twenty third Sunday after Pentecost)



Information for the teacher:

According to Wikipedia, “In religious belief, a saint is a person who is recognized as having an exceptional degree of holiness or likeness or closeness to God.” In other words, a saint is a person who lived their life serving God. This can be seen in their serving the Church, their wisdom, their helping of the poor, sick, and people in need. They were people of great faith who believed in God and loved people.

Today's lessons will focus on the saints. Questions such as “who was/is a saint?” What did they do? Can we all be saints? This lesson will try explaining the saints through the lens of super heroes. Whereas saints may be less accessible or understandable for young children, they understand superheroes and even have their favourite heroes from different stories or movies. Like a lot of superheroes, saints are also normal people who have God given abilities they use to help people and serve God. We can try make this apply to the children, for example, some superheroes have different abilities, some are very strong, fast, some can disappear, and some can fly, as Christians, saints also have different abilities, like love, compassion, wisdom, faith, caring for the sick, helping those who don't have... These are also like superpowers because with them we can all make the world a better place. Be as creative as you like in explaining this. Use examples of great Christian saints and explain some of the things they did. These may include people like the biblical saints, Mother Teresa, Francis of Assisi, Therese of Lisieux. The saints teach us how to be holy and live lives of love, peace, unity and compassion. In a message to young people, pope Francis said the following:

“We need saints without cassocks, without veils – we need saints with jeans and tennis shoes. We need saints that go to the movies that listen to music, that hang out with their friends. We need saints that place God in first place ahead of succeeding in any career. We need saints that look for time to pray every day and who know how to be in love with purity, chastity and all good things. We need saints – saints for the 21st century with a spirituality appropriate to our new time. We need saints that have a commitment to helping the poor and to make the needed social change. We need saints to live in the world, to sanctify the world and to not be afraid of living in the world by their presence in it. We need saints that drink Coca-Cola, that eat hot dogs, that surf the internet and that listen to their iPods. We need saints that love the Eucharist, that are not afraid or embarrassed to eat a pizza or drink a beer with their friends. We need saints who love the movies, dance, sports, theater. We need saints that are open sociable normal happy companions. we need saints who are in this world and who know how to enjoy the best in this world without being callous or mundane. We need saints.”

References

<http://ylcatholic.blogspot.com/2013/07/pope-francis-speaks-about-young-life-at.html> (Accessed 20 November 2020)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint> (Accessed on 23 November 2020)

Lesson Suggestions:



This lesson is applicable for children of all age groups:

Lesson objectives:

- To understand what a saint is.
- To learn about some of the saints
- To understand that we too must be saints and live holy lives.

Attention Grabber:

Who is your favourite superhero?

Ask the children if they have favourite superhero. If they do, find out the name, their superpower, and what do they use it for (how do they help people). For younger children, if they do not remember their favourite superhero names, showing them pictures may also be helpful. Tell them that today we are going to learn about the superheroes of the church, the saints.



Discussion:

You may begin by asking the children who knows what is All Saints Day? Tell them that November 1 is a special day called the feast of **All Saints**. "It is the day the Church celebrates with all the people who have died and are now with God in heaven. We go to church and remember that all these holy people are happy with God." All those who have died and are with God are called **saints**. They can be family, friends and people who do not know.

Returning to the idea of superheroes, tell them that saints are also like superheroes. They had superpowers that made the world a better place. You could ask them to remind you what they gift/superpower does their favourite superhero have. Here are a few examples:

Superhero:

Captain America

Wonder Woman

Black Panther

Spider- Man

Invisible Woman

Ant-Man and the Wasp

Superpower:

Very strong, good leader,

Very strong, brave, smart,

Speed, strong, very smart

Speed, jumping, shooting webs

Ability to be invisible, smart,

Flying, ability to be very small or very big.

Just like superheroes had special gifts that allowed them to help others, saints also are like superheroes because they loved God, people and made the world a better place. It would be good to share some more famous stories of saints. Stories of the saints should include where they are from, and how did they live holy lives. What are some of the

great things they done? (showing pictures or videos may be helpful). Here is a example of considerable saints:

Saint Francis: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_of_Assisi

Thérèse of Lisieux: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Th%C3%A9r%C3%A8se_of_Lisieux

Julian of Norwich: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_of_Norwich

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietrich_Bonhoeffer

Martin Luther King Jr: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Luther_King_Jr.

Mother Teresa: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Teresa

A saint closer to home, (South African) and a story of a young person is that of **Manche Masemola** : https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manche_Masemola

(feel free to share the life of any saint you find helpful, be as creative as you like, there are some videos of saints aimed at young people on YouTube, be sure to check some out if needed).

<https://www.loyolapress.com/catholic-resources/saints/saints-activities/lesson-plans/all-saints-day-lesson-plan-grades-1-to-3/> (Accessed on 26 November 2020).

Presentation: At the end of the lesson, you can ask the children to present about how they will live more holy and loving lives. In other words, ask them what actions they will do to live a life of saint (optional).



Snacks: Please feel free to choose or bring any snack, for the sack of the lesson (us practicing holy lives), it will be good if the children serve each other in giving/eating the snacks. Be as creative as you like.



Songs: Select songs learnt within the lessons this year.



Craft: *Super-hero chart*

The children can create their “superhero” powers. Instead of powers like flying or being extraordinarily strong, encourage them to choose ordinary values. Tell them, that having such values are just like having superpowers because we can do great things simply by being good loving Christians. They can choose their values and write it on a beautiful chart (any size paper will work). When it comes to Christian values, you can also remind them of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Here is an example.





Activities: Select the most loved games from the lessons taught this year or perhaps play a game which has some team building in it. That way, you can suggest that as Christians living holy lives means working as team to get to our goal.

Other simple games you may want to play include:

Following the leader.

We need to follow Jesus, even when it's not easy. Children follow the teacher – the children line up and each child puts their hands on the person in front of them. They then do whatever the teacher does – which may not always be easy, such as hopping on one foot, crawling under tables etc.

No Smiling

Tell everyone in a very serious tone that you will not tolerate any smiling. Then tell a joke. See if people can keep a straight face. You might not be a comedian, but it's harder than you think not to laugh. Chances are that within five minutes everyone will be laughing their faces off. That's a good way to start a meeting, and you'll find it a more effective one because of it.

Hot & Cold

Hide something in the room, maybe some money or the meeting agenda or something random, then have the team try and work together to discover it. You only can respond by saying they're hot or cold when they search. Depending on how big your meeting room is, this might be an absurd assignment, but that just makes it a better game.



Prayer: The prayer by saint Francis of Assisi may be very fitting for this lesson.

Lord make Me an instrument of Your peace
Where there is hatred let me sow love.
Where there is injury, pardon.
Where there is doubt, faith.
Where there is despair, hope.
Where there is darkness, light.
Where there is sadness joy.
O Divine master grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled as to console
To be understood, as to understand.
To be loved. as to love
For it's in giving that we receive
And it's in pardoning that we are pardoned
And it's in dying that we are born...
To eternal life. Amen

Alternative prayer:

Lord, thank you for loving us and teaching us how to live loving and holy lives. Just like all the saints, may we also be saints who love others, and treat everybody and every creature with respect. Amen

Name: _____

Date: _____

All Saints Day

Z A N N O X R M R S V U Z H U C I K S O M N T Y
E K Z R G C Z X H E J H P R U X M I W Y T Q F Z
K Z O B H M P U V I Y J E Y B L C D C T I B M T
O O Q P G Z R D Y Q Q Z T Y D N Z L E A H P A R
B U J Z W F K Z V T T I E C A Q P X E H Z U E I
W R H M S Y X A Q W C J R R I U O N Y R A M C K
I L B R I D G E T I B U F M U T I E N N E Y C I
H A X W A N Y N L Q O D C P N R M C Y L R J T P
T D W W Q Q A E D M R E H E E I B N S M X O U X
E Y M L U N F W F X A C A H B P C B E W C A S O
B O K I H O Q X V H L Z T E E Y C H J A M E S E
A F F K C Z T V Z B D A V A S P L J O J D H J F
Z F I Q F H M U M L C K J C A I W R B L P T Y U
I A R L B H A S E R E T R T M R U G B E A Q S W
L T Y T Z A T E W S A S R Y E H W O S U H S A A
E I F E C N K V L P K I H M Z A G O L V F N Z G
H M Q F E X Q S A R C B M I F C J Z K W X L A M
K A K C J N S U A K G S R B R E N D A N L U K E
H X N O E A L M E A X A C H T H E R E S E Q P J
I I A K K X B H B S J T R H Q N W E H T T A M N
V N I N F K R R N U V S B U Y Z R D E K V G Z R
Z Z A H I T I T F S Q X K O C T N Z M W O H T N
U B T O O E H I X U N L O D U V K L O Q O M D E
D M X J L Z Z D Y R M E O C L A Z A H X M A X R

James	Louise	Catherine	OurLadyofFatima
Lucy	Felicity	Joan	Raphael
Gabriel	Michael	Brendan	Bridget
Patrick	Ann	Rose	Francis
Peter	Paul	John	Luke
Mark	Matthew	vincent	Nicholas
Jude	Teresa	Therese	Elizabeth
Joseph	Mary		



The gift of wisdom (Solomon)

Twenty fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Reading: 1 Kings 3:1-28

Theme: Wisdom

Memory verse: "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" 1 Kings 3:9



Information for the teacher:

Solomon, son of David and Bathsheba, was the third king of Israel. He was not the first son to David and so there was an attempt to take control of the throne by Adonijah who was David's eldest surviving son. However, the prophet Nathan found out about the take over and went to speak to Bathsheba, who spoke to David (who at the time was very old and ill). David put his foot down and Solomon was chosen to succeed his father. He inherited a powerful empire and ruled for 40 years when all of Israel was united as one kingdom. Solomon is most widely remembered for his wisdom. Which was one of the gifts that God gave Solomon. God appears to Solomon in a dream and asks Solomon what he wishes and Solomon asks for wisdom. God gives Solomon far more than just wisdom as he is pleased with Solomon's wish and also gave him riches, long life and honour.

Solomon did many good things when he became King, He built many things across the land. The most praiseworthy project was the palace, Yahweh's temple in Jerusalem and the wall around Jerusalem. He was given a discerning mind and often had to make hard decisions in order to settle disputes. Solomon was also known for his good governance which meant he needed to be practical and organized.

Solomon displeases God towards the end of his reign (1 King 11:1-13), as he forgets his love for Yahweh and turns away from God's guidance. Yahweh is angry at Solomon and so Solomon's empire will not last.

Today's lesson focuses on the meaning of wisdom and how to be wise in the eyes of God.

(resource comes from The New Jerome Biblical commentary)

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the story of Solomon
- To understand what it means to be wise.



Attention Grabber:

If you could have anything in the world that you wanted, what would you ask for? (Give the children a chance to answer this question)

Today we are going to learn about a man who was asked by God what he wanted – this man's name was Solomon. Let's listen to the story and find out what he wished for.



Bible Story: Solomon (1 Kings 3:1-28)

Solomon was David's son. We have been learning about David over the past few weeks. (Ask the children what they remember about David)

David loved God with all his heart. David lived to be an old man and before he died, he chose Solomon to be the next king. David said to Solomon, "Make sure you follow God in all you do, and God will bless you."

Solomon listened carefully to what his father said and followed God in all he did. One night Solomon fell into a deep sleep and began to dream.

God spoke to him in that dream. God asked Solomon the very same question you were asked at the beginning of class. God said, "Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you."

What do you think Solomon asked for?

Solomon said, "Lord God, I am king of all these people, but I am very young and I don't know how to look after all these people. Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. *(Perhaps tell the little children that to be wise doesn't mean to be clever so that you know all your school work - it means to listen to and obey God's teachings and to know the right thing to do in every situation)*

Did Solomon say, "I want to be the richest, most powerful king in the world?" No!

Did Solomon say, "I want to live a long life?" No!

What did Solomon ask God for? To be wise

How do you think God answered Solomon?

God said, "Solomon, I am pleased that you asked for this. You could have asked to live a long time or to be rich. Or you could have asked for your enemies to be destroyed. Instead, you asked to be wise. So I'll make you wiser than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live.

I will also give you what you didn't ask for. You'll be rich, and you'll be greater than any other king – you will win over all your enemies. And you live a long time!"

Wow! Not only did God give Solomon the wisdom he asked for-God also promised him that he would be greater than any other king! And he promised Solomon a long life! Solomon was truly blessed!



Review Questions:

1. Who were Solomon’s parents? (*David, and his mother was Bathsheba*)
2. What did Solomon ask of God? (*He asked for wisdom*)
3. What did God give Solomon? (*God gave Solomon wisdom, as well as riches, victory over his enemies and a long life*)



Discussion

1. Do you know what it means to be wise?
2. What is the difference between being wise and clever?
3. How do you think Solomon felt when he had to take over from his Father at a young age?
4. How do you think we can become wise like Solomon?



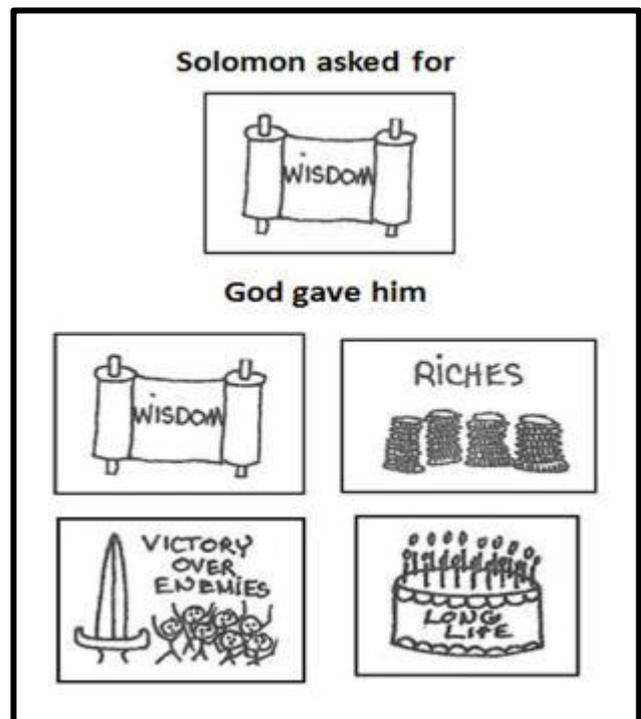
Prayer:

Let us ask God to make us wise, just as Solomon did:

“Dear Lord God. Help me to be wise in all that I do. Teach me to know the difference between right and wrong. Amen”



Craft: Today our craft tells the story of Solomon in a simple way, as shown in the picture below. Encourage the children to draw their own pictures rather than using those below. You may want to discuss with the children that in the days of Solomon, people used to write on scrolls instead of books. The children can make their own scrolls – some ideas on how to do this can be found at the end of the lesson. The children can also give their paper an “old” look by staining it with tea and then simply roll up their “scroll” and tie a piece of ribbon or string around it to keep it in place.



Physical activities:

1. Solomon was very wise and one of the very wise things that Solomon said was that to be wise/ clever is to be like hidden treasure, and that we should look for it. (Prov 2:4)
The children can go on a treasure hunt to search for a treasure box or some coins to represent treasure. When they return with the treasure ask the children what is more important than all the riches in the world – it is to be wise.

2. Blindfolded shoe game: All the children take their shoes off and put in a pile. Blindfold the children. Mix the pile of shoes up. The children then need to find their shoes and put them on. After the game discuss with the children that without God's wisdom it is like trying to find shoes while blind folded. Everything is easier if we have God's wisdom in our lives –if we know what it is that God wants us to do.



Older children (7 – 13 years)

Lesson objectives:

- To learn about the story of Solomon
- To understand the meaning of wisdom
- To realise that to be wise is a great gift
- To learn a little about the book of Proverbs



Attention Grabber: If you could have anything in the world that you wanted, what would you ask for?



Bible Story: Solomon (1 Kings 3:1-28)

Over the past few weeks, we have learnt of King David – what do you remember about him?

King David lived to be an old man. Before he died, he chose his son Solomon to be the next king. David told Solomon, “Be sure to follow God's laws, and God will bless you.”

Solomon listened carefully to his father's advice. After David died, Solomon went to worship God. That night Solomon fell into a deep sleep and began to dream.

God spoke to him in that dream. God asked Solomon the very same question you were asked at the beginning of this lesson. God said, “Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you.” (1 Kings 3:5)

What do you think Solomon asked for? Solomon's answer may surprise you! Solomon said, “Lord God, I'm your servant, and you've made me king in my father's place. But I am very young and know so little about being a leader. And now I must rule your chosen people, even though there are too many of them to count. Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. If you don't, there is no way I could rule this great nation of yours.” (1 Kings 3:7-9)

Did Solomon say, “I want to be the richest, most powerful king in the world?” No!

Did Solomon say, “I want to live a long life?” No!

What did Solomon ask God for? To be wise

How do you think God answered Solomon?

God said, “Solomon, I am pleased that you asked for this. You could have asked to live a long time or to be rich. Or you could have asked for your enemies to be destroyed. Instead, you asked for

wisdom to make right decisions. So, I'll make you wiser than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live.

I will also give you what you didn't ask for. You'll be rich and respected as long as you live, and you'll be greater than any other king. Also, if you obey me and follow my commands, as your father, David did, you will live a long time." (1 Kings 11-14)

Wow! Not only did God give Solomon the wisdom he asked for-God also promised him he would be greater than any other king! And he promised Solomon a long life!

And Solomon was indeed wise, rich and a great king – even the Queen of Sheba came to visit him, and when she saw the extent of his wisdom and riches, she was overwhelmed. Solomon had indeed been greatly blessed!



Review Questions:

1. Who were Solomon's parents? *(David, and his mother was Bathsheba)*
2. What did Solomon ask of God? *(He asked for wisdom)*
3. What did God give Solomon? *(wisdom, as well as wealth, greatness and long life.)*



Discussion

1. What is the difference between being wise and being clever /knowledgeable?
(To be clever or knowledgeable means that you know a lot about something; To be wise is to have experience, knowledge and good judgment – to be able to judge what is right and wrong – to apply your knowledge to practical situations.)
2. Wisdom is something that we ask for in order to do the greater good. Do you think you could have chosen something if God offered it, that would benefit the greater good or would you have pick something that would just benefit yourself?
3. What has been the hardest decision you have had to make?
4. Why do you think Solomon asked for wisdom? *(To enable him to rule God's people effectively. Solomon knew that greatness comes from God – his father David had taught him to follow God's ways. Solomon knew that being a king was a hard job. He knew he needed God's help.)*
5. Do you think there is a difference between Godly wisdom and wisdom of the world?
6. We know a king needs wisdom, but does a child need wisdom? *(Yes, we need wisdom to help us make decisions in our daily life – to make the choices between right and wrong which are in accordance with God's way.)*
7. How do you think we can become wise like Solomon? *(Listen to God; fellowship with other Christians; learn more about God; wisdom comes from the heart!)*
8. Here is a problem for you to solve that requires you to be wise, not necessarily clever!
a. A traveller comes to a split in the road which leads to two villages. In one village the people always tell lies, and in the other village the people always tell the truth. A man from one of the villages standing at the split in the road, but there is no indication of which village he is from. The traveller approaches the man and asks him one question. From the villager's answer, he knows which road to follow. What did the traveller ask? (The traveller asked, "Which road goes to your village?" He would then take the road the villager pointed to, because a truthful person would point towards the correct village and the liar would also point to the correct village, since he is a liar and therefore would not point to his own village!)

b. A farmer returns from the market, where he bought goat, a cabbage and a lion (what a crazy market!). On the way home he must cross a river. His boat is small and won't fit more than one of his purchases. He cannot leave the goat alone with the cabbage because the goat would eat it. He also cannot leave the goat alone with the lion, because the lion will eat the goat. How can the farmer get everything to the other side of the river? *(The farmer will first carry the goat to the other side. He will then take the lion to the other side. He cannot leave the lion and the goat alone, so he will return with the goat. He will leave the goat and take the cabbage to the other side of the river. He will then come back for the goat and take it to the other side of the river.)*



Activity ideas:

Solomon passed his wisdom onto us in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. Today we will discover what some of these words of wisdom are. There are two activities to select from:

1. Have a relay race. Divide the children into teams. Each team needs to have their own set of balloons, and there need to be enough balloons so that each child is able to pop a balloon. One child in the team needs to race to a number of balloons which have been set up, pop a balloon, collect the proverb verse which was placed in the balloon, run back to the start, look up the verse in the Bible and then read it to the rest of the group. Once this is done, the next child in the team races to get a proverb from one of the balloons. The race is over once all the balloons have been popped. (A variation of this game is to blindfold the child who is racing to pop the balloon. This child will then need to listen to the others for instructions on how to find a balloon.) A list of verses from proverbs that you can use for this activity can be found on the next page.

Balloons are not environmentally friendly so collect some tins to put the verses under or under cups or something.

2. Proverb cookies! These are similar to fortune cookies where a proverb is placed within the cookie. The teacher can make these before the lesson or if you have cooking facilities, the children can choose their favourite proverb and then make their own proverb cookie to give to someone.

Here is a recipe that you can use to make proverb cookies:

3 egg whites

3/4 cup white sugar

1/2 cup butter, melted and cooled

1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/4 teaspoon almond extract

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 tablespoons water

Preheat the oven to 190 °C. Grease baking sheets. Have proverbs ready to go on small strips of paper.

In a large glass or metal bowl, whip egg whites and sugar on high speed of an electric mixer until frothy, about 2 minutes. Reduce speed to low, and stir in melted butter, vanilla, almond extract, water and flour one at a time, mixing well after each. Consistency should resemble pancake batter. Spoon the batter into 7 cm circles on the prepared baking sheets. Leave room between each circle for spreading.

Bake for 5 to 7 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the edges begin to brown slightly.

Quickly remove one at a time, place a message in the centre, and fold in half. Fold the ends of the half together into a horse shoe shape, and place in a muffin tin to cool until set.

NB!! Although these cookies do not bend if over baked, you need to bake them long enough until they are golden around the edges so that they are not under baked, else they will be soft, spongy and pancake-like. Also, if you heat the baking sheets before putting the cookies on, they spread more easily into circles.

Here is a list of verses that you can use for these activities:

Prov 22:1	Prov 4:23	Prov 16:18
Ecc 1:4	Prov 3:3-4	Prov 16:8
Prov 22:2	Prov 3:5-6	Prov 18:10
Prov 15:16	Prov 3:11-12	
Prov 4:11 -13	Prov 3:13-14	
Prov 27:19	Prov 3:27-28	
Ecc 3:1-8	Prov 3:30	
Ecc 12:13	Prov 7:1	



Craft:

1. The children choose one of the proverbs from the list in the above section. They can then illustrate this proverb. An example of such an illustration follows:



Start a treasure box of Bible verses. Children can decorate their “words of wisdom” box and then add their favourite verses to this box, starting with the verses from proverbs. These boxes will need to be quite sturdy. You can help the children make boxes from cardboard cereal boxes or use any box that is suitable



Worksheet: Play hangman or jumble up the letters of the words found below, and then ask the children to unscramble the words e.g. “abby” would be baby. Ask the children how each word relates to the story of Solomon.

Solomon	David	Sheeba	Wisdom	Wealth	baby
dream	Proverbs	Ecclesiastes	Bathsheeba	king	



Prayer:

How did Solomon become wise? *(He asked God to make him wise)*

We can also ask God for wisdom. Here is the prayer Solomon prayed to God. Let's make it our own prayer for today:

Dear Lord God. Help me to be wise in all that I do. Teach me to know the difference between right and wrong. Amen

1 Kings 3:9

References:

www.forchildren.com

www.rotation.org

www.auntiesbiblelessons.wordpress.com



Craft: Make a scroll

Wise sayings are often written down. In biblical times they were written on scrolls. You may want to discuss with the children that in the days of Solomon, people used to write on scrolls instead of books.

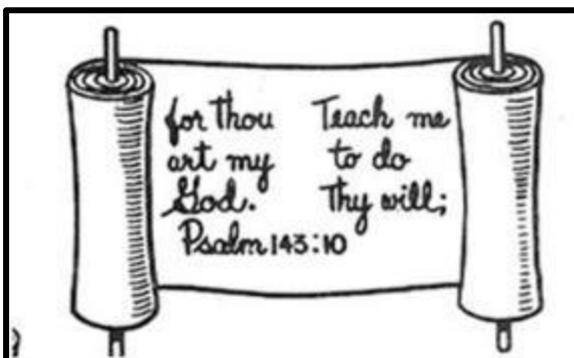
You could also suggest to the children that if they had a wish list they could write it down.

Today our craft will be making a scroll.

You can make a scroll that tells the story of Solomon. He was a king, he was a wise judge, he built the temple. Let the children decide what pictures they would like to draw that represent Solomon.

The children can make their own scrolls – below are some ideas on how to do this. The children can also give their paper an “old” look by staining it with tea and then simply roll up their “scroll” and tie a piece of ribbon or string around it to keep it in place.

Instructions for making scrolls



To make a scroll as shown in the diagram alongside, you will need white paper and two dowels/ sticks. Write your story on the paper before making the scroll. You may like to start writing backwards to the way we write today – the people in Biblical times used to read from right to left. So, begin your story on the right hand side, as shown in the picture above and then continue your story on the left.

Once you have finished your story, tape the ends of the white paper to the sticks / dowels – be sure that the paper is centred to the sticks. Roll all the paper onto the left stick. You are now ready to tell your story!

Speaking the truth in love: God is no fool

Twenty fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Readings: Isaiah 1:1, 10-20

Theme: Being your true self

Memory verse: Isaiah 17: Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the cause of the widow.



Information for the teacher:

In today's scripture God uses a man named Isaiah to be God's mouthpiece to the people. Isaiah is a prophet. A prophet was a person who was connected to God, who would transfer the messages received from God to the people of their land. As a mouthpiece the prophet spoke on behalf of God. In the scripture reading Isaiah is telling the people that God knows what they are really doing. Their offerings, prayers and incense displease God because they are not behaving like God's people. They are sinning, resisting God and rebelling against God, even while pretending to be religious. God speaks through Isaiah who is trying to explain to God's people that their actions will have consequences.

If we see our relationship with God as a parent- child relationship, we understand that God is telling us, God's children not to do the things that are wrong. When we do wrong things, we need to be warned because God knows that it's not going to end well. Just like when your parents told you not to touch a hot stove. You had the choice to listen to your parents or touch the hot stove and get burned.

God doesn't want us to struggle and suffer. God wants to guide us and lead us in the light. We have to put our trust in God, especially when times do get difficult. We should not have altera motives. It's not about what you do but why you do it.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objective:

To encourage children to be their true self. God loves you exactly the way you are. God does tell us how to behave. We can choose to follow God's way or not. But we must remember that everything we do has consequences.



Attention Grabber: The patient marshmallow.

You can do this activity with a group of volunteers or you can do it with the whole group and have everyone participate.

You will need a minimum of 2 marshmallows per child.

Give the children a marshmallow and tell them that they have a choice. They can eat it right now or they can wait, a certain amount of time, and not eat the marshmallow. If they wait they will receive a second marshmallow, at the end of the waiting period; BUT ONLY IF THEY DID NOT EAT THE MARSHMALLOW.

Explain that the children were given an easy instruction. They had the choice to choose between two options, but they had to be ok with the outcome.

This is how God treats us. God has given us a way of life. We get to choose how to live our life. Sometime the consequences are not pleasant and sometimes they are.

You can ask your group to tell you examples like don't lie because the truth always comes out, don't touch a hot stove because you will burn yourself. Study hard and you will do well in a test, offer a hungry person food and they won't be hungry after eating etc.



Bible Story and Discussion:

Read Isaiah 1:16-20.

Who is Isaiah? (Isaiah is a prophet in the old Testament of the bible)

What does Isaiah do? (Prophets speak on behalf of God to the people)

What would a prophet be telling the people to do today? (Wash yourselves, do the right thing, defend those who are being bullied, look after orphans and single parents)

Why do our parents tell us to wash our hands before we eat? (so we don't eat germs so that we stay healthy). Do you think that's a good reason?

God is telling us to do something similar, except God wants us to 'wash off our sins'

How do we 'wash off our sins'? (by saying sorry to God and to those we have hurt and to try not do it again)

If our parents have given us a rule to follow (you can ask your group for rules that they have at home) and we decide to break that rule, what happens next? (normally parents will find out and

sometimes we get disciplined. Discipline does not mean that we get hit. There are many other ways of disciplining children. The saying spare the rod and spoil the child does not refer to physical hitting. The rod refers to a standards that we should follow. Like in psalm 23 which says "Thy rod and they staff they comfort me) Is that fair? Why or why not?

Explain to your children that everything we do has consequences. Our parents give us rules to look after us just like God does.



Prayer: Hi Jesus! Thank you so much for this day. Thank you for our teachers and friends. Help us to remember that you know us. Thank you for guiding me every day and helping me when I make mistakes. We love you so much! Amen.



Physical activity: The clapping game

Have a practice round. Ask all the participants to clap their hands once. Pause while participants do this.

Tell the children: Complain that the children's clapping was not together and not very good / unimpressive and that you want them to synchronize their claps so that those outside the room hear a single thunderous sound.

Provide performance support. Explain that you will say the word clap after you have counted to three: you will count "One, two, three" and then say, "Clap." Ask everyone in the room to wait until you say, "Clap" before they clap simultaneously.

Conduct the activity. Count out loud, "One, two, three." Immediately after you say "three," clap your hands (without saying the word "Clap"). Most children will follow your lead and clap their hands as well. Act surprised and say, "Clap."

Debriefing

Ask the participants why they did not follow your instructions and wait until they heard the word "Clap" before clapping hands. Some participant will likely say, "But you clapped your hands." They will likely anticipate your response, "Would you jump off a cliff if I did?" Ask the participants what they learned from the activity. Discuss the learning points that the participants offer.

You can increase the difficulty by clapping more than once or by making a rhythm.

Learning Points

1. Actions speak louder than words.
2. People follow your actions more than your words.
3. A big gap exists between understanding instructions and following them



Craft:

Mask Craft

You will need:

Paper plates or a round paper, String
Scissors, Pencils or crayons, Punch

Help each child hold a paper plate up to his face. Lightly make eye holes with a pencil where each child's eyes are.

Help the children cut out the eye holes if they are not able to do it themselves.

Encourage the children to decorate the masks with crayons into someone or something they like. Children can make a favourite animal or superhero. Punch a hole on either side of the plate and cut a piece of string long enough to tie around the child's head. Tie the string so children can wear their masks.

Discussion

Gather the children to talk about the mask craft. Discuss that while it's fun to wear a mask for a party or Halloween or playtime, masks hide who we really are. Explain that honesty is showing the world who we are and what we think about circumstances, places and other people. Help the children understand the importance of authenticity in healthy relationships by saying that good friends tell each other what they think and feel in a kind, respectful way. Talk about the consequences of lying, such as making people think they can't trust you or be friends with you and making you feel guilty



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objective:

To be their true self. God loves you exactly the way you are. God does tell us how to behave. We can choose to follow God's way or not. But we must remember that everything we do has consequences. Isaiah was a prophet and prophets spoke on behalf of God



Attention Grabber: Two truths and a lie or the attention grabber used in the younger group.

How to play two truths and a lie.

Have 1 child go at a time. They need to tell their group 2 true things about themselves and 1 lie. The group then has to figure which is the lie.



Bible Story and Discussion:

Isaiah 1 10-20

Ask your group what stands out in the passage for them?

How does this passage make you feel?

What is a prophet and what do they do? (a person regarded as an inspired teacher or proclaimer of the will of God, they are NOT fortune tellers who can see the future)

What is Isaiah really saying to Gods people? (God is tired of people pretending. They are showing the world that they are good God fearing / loving people by following the rituals (like going to church) but they are not behaving like God fearing/ loving people)

Do you think we are always honest all the time? Are you honest all the time?

Why do people pretend to be someone they are not?

Do you think God knows when we are pretending and when we are not?

What do you think God wants us to do?

Be ourselves, even if we are unpopular/geeky/ not the best sports player or best at academics/ shy/loud/tall/short/poor/wealthy/come from a broken family etc. Or pretend to fit into the world?

If we are pretending to be someone we not, what will happen when people find out? What are the consequences of pretending and being honest?

Bible Activity:

Instructions: Read the Isaiah passage, and then find the passage in the Gospel where the prophecy is fulfilled.

Isaiah 42:1-3	Matthew 1:20-23	Luke 7:20-22	John 5:25-27
Isaiah 7:14	Matthew 12:14-21	Luke 4:16-21	Acts 4:10-12
Isaiah 29:18	Matthew 27:57-60		Romans 4:25
Isaiah 61:1-2	Matthew 11:5	Luke 4:18	
Isaiah 53:5-6			1 Peter 2:25



Prayer. Dear Jesus. Thank you that you are interested in me. Please would you guide me every day and remind me that you are with me when I forget. Please meet me here in my prayer. Please help me to seek you in all that I do, please help me be the person you designed me to be. We love you lots
Amen.



Physical activity:

Smoke signals.

Have your group stand in a circle. Tell them they only way to communicate is through movement. Have each child demonstrate a movement that's unique to them (they can show a peace sign, stick out their tongue, do a dance movement etc.) everyone has to be different.

How to play.

Have 1 person in the centre of the circle. The person in the centre has to spot the person making their 'smoke signal'. Once they catch them making it that person is then on.

Everyone in the circle. They have to pass on their signal to another person in the circle without the person in the middle seeing them. How they pass the signal on is by first performing their movement followed by someone else's. This then carries on until the person in the middle catches them.

? How much do you know?

Feast of Christ the King

Readings: Mark 1:29-39

Theme: Jesus heals

Memory verses: "Jesus healed many who were sick and those who had demons" (34)



Information for the teacher:

Today's lesson is almost the last for the year. Next week it will be Advent and then a Christmas lesson and maybe have a party, so this Sunday is a good opportunity to revise all the lessons that have been covered. This could be done in the form of a quiz, which can be done in many ways.

For the very young children, this could involve the teacher paging through the Bible, asking simple questions about the stories taught, and singing songs learnt throughout the year about each of the stories.

For the older children, each teacher may prepare a quiz based on all the lessons taught this year. The questions should range from simple to difficult. A few memory verses can be included. To make the quiz less daunting, the children may like to answer the quiz in groups. Each group can write their answers on a piece of paper, which the other groups, or the teacher can mark at the end of the quiz. The quiz, including the marking of it, should not take much more than 30 minutes - it is supposed to be fun! There can be a small prize for the winning team.

Another way to conduct the quiz is to bring the whole Sunday School together, and then to divide the children into groups, such that each group has a range of ages. The quiz then needs to have easy questions for the very young to answer, as well as more challenging questions for the older children. As you work through today's lesson, you will find that all aspects are a form of revision.

Or you can conduct it in the style of 'Family feud' game show. This will be included in the lesson for the older age group.

If you have kept samples of the crafts and worksheets done this year, they can be put on display. You may have taken photos of some of the activities which can also serve as a reminder of all that has been done.

Today is also an opportunity to invite the parents to the Sunday School to see what the children have learnt throughout the year.

Lesson Suggestions:



Younger Children (3 – 6 years):

Lesson Objectives:

To revise what we have learnt during the year and to see how much the children remember but in a fun way. This is not a test.



Attention Grabber:

Select the most loved games from the lessons taught this year or perhaps play a game which you did not get a chance to play during the lesson earlier this year.



Songs: Any songs that are the children's favourite.



Craft: Put out some materials that the children can use as a response to what they have learnt this year, or what has stood out for them in Sunday School this year, or what their favourite lesson was, or what Sunday school means to them. Materials could include paper, cardboard, scissors, glue, crayons, glitter, sand, or perhaps they could make use of something in the church gardens. Again, this craft work can be put on display for all to see.



Snack:



Prayer: Use the prayer time as an opportunity to remind the children of all that has been learnt this year. Perhaps the teacher can introduce an idea and the children can add their own prayers. Note that the prayer should not be too long, so it is therefore not possible to include all the lessons taught this year. Here follows an example of a prayer that can be used. Remember to keep it simple for the younger children.

Dear Lord. We praise you that you are an amazing God. We thank you that you sent Jesus into the world to show us how to live. We thank you for the miracles of Jesus, such as (*children contribute*), proving that you are master of everything. We thank you that through these stories we know that Jesus truly is the Son of God.

We also thank you that you love us. Like David, may we love you with all of our heart and soul and mind, and help us to love others as you have loved us.

Help us to be like seeds which grow in good soil. Help us to read our Bibles and pray everyday so that we can grow to be more like you.

Thank you that you always keep your promises. Like the Old Testament characters, Moses, Gideon, (*children contribute*), help us to learn to trust and obey you in all that we do.

May we always remember what a great and mighty God we serve and that there is nothing that you cannot do.

And so as this year comes to an end, keep us safe from all that is bad and help us to spread good throughout the world. May you always be King of our lives and this Christmas, may we be reminded that YOU are at the centre of the Christmas story.

Amen



Older children (7 – 13 years):

Lesson objectives:

- To revise what they have learnt throughout the year in a fun way.



Attention Grabber:

You can play the sound track of ‘*Family feud*’ to get everyone’s attention.

Ask the group if they have ever watched a game show on tv.

Today we going to play a popular family game show called “family feud”. This game show has Steve Harvey as the presenter and there was even a south African version not so long ago!

Today lesson is going to be just like ‘*Family feud*’ but we are going to revise on the lessons we learnt this year!

This can be conducted in each class, the class split into equal teams or if your classes are small enough you could go class against class.

To get an idea on how you can conduct it in a large group setting follow this YouTube Link

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3KoXUQKV2c>

How to play:

1. Divide the class into two teams.
2. One member of each team faces the other in a face-off as the teacher reads the question off the game board (or paper)
3. The team that buzzed(if you have a buzzer or they can raise their hand) in with the correct answer receives control of the board, this is the first set of questions, and has the option of playing or passing control to the other team.
4. The team that has the control tries to reveal all of the correct answers to the question before receiving three strikes. If the answer is wrong they get a strike or if it doesn’t appear.
5. If the team receives three strikes without clearing the board, control is passed to the other team.
6. The team that now has the control is able to give one answer in the hopes that it is found on the answer sheet.
 - If it is, points are added to the team’s score. Points can be calculated in single numbers or in 10s
 - If not, the other team gets the points.
7. Points are collected as each team finds its answers to the question on the board. (Click the Score button to add points to the appropriate team’s score.)
8. Continue the game after each question repeating steps two through seven.
9. Each team tries to collect the most points. The team with the most points wins the game! You can have a score sheet to keep track.

Lets play:

1. Call up 1 person from each group.

First set of questions:

1 - Give a woman's name from the Bible.

- a) Mary b) Sarah c) Eve d) Martha e) Deborah f) Elizabeth

Call up 1 person from each group

2- Name an animal that is mentioned several times in the Bible.

- a) Snake b) Lion c) Sheep d) Ox e) Fish f) Goat

Call up 1 person from each group

3- Name a word that is used more than any other in the Bible.

- a) Lord b) Shall c) Amen d) Thou e) King f) Son

Call up 1 person from each group

4- Name the 10 plagues of Egypt

- a) water turning to blood, b) frogs, c) lice, d) flies/ mites, e) death of livestock, f) boils, g) hail, h) locusts, i) darkness and j) the killing of firstborn children

Call up 1 person from each group

5- Tell me anything you know about John the Baptist

- a) born to Elizabeth and Zechariah. b) He lived in the desert. c) His clothes were made of camel's hair and he wore a leather belt around his waist. d) He ate locusts and honey. e) His job was to get everyone ready for Jesus. f) He told people to be sorry for all the bad things they did. g) He would then baptise them in the river Jordan h) He baptised Jesus.

Call up 1 person from each group

6- Who were the first 4 disciples Jesus called?

- a) Simon, b) Andrew, c) James d) John

7- How does Jesus use his authority, when teaching in the synagogue?

- a) Jesus spoke from the heart, b) he spoke the truth. c) He backed up his words with deeds/actions. d) He provided vision, inspiration and meaning. e) Jesus use his authority to help us not to destroy us.

8- Who does Jesus heal?

- a) Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31), b) Jesus heals a blind man (John 9:1-12) c) Jesus heals the deaf (Mark 7:31- 37), d) Jesus heals the lame ((Mark 2:1-5; John 5:1-9), e) Jesus heals the ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19), f) Jesus raises Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8:40-42; 49-56), g) Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1-44)

b)

9- On Transfiguration Sunday Jesus took up some disciples up a mountain, who were they?

- a) Peter, b) James, c) John, his brother

10- On the mountain, stated above, who did the disciples see?

- a) Elijah, b) Moses c) Jesus

11- When Jesus went into the desert for 40 days and nights, He was Tempted. What were those temptations?

- a) Turn stones into bread, b) To show how great he is by being the Son of God (Leap from a pinnacle and rely on angels to break his fall.), c) with riches and power, to be a rich powerful king (Kneel before Satan in return for all the kingdoms of the world.)

12- When Jesus clears the temple courts before Passover what things that were being sold, made Jesus so angry?

- a) Cattle b) sheep c) doves d) exchanging money.

13- Continue to make up your own questions



Craft: Refer to the younger children's section for ideas to use or adapt.



Physical activity: Refer to the younger children's section for ideas to use or adapt



Songs:



Prayer: Make use of an open form of prayer. Look at the younger children's prayer for ideas.

References: www.sermons4kids.com



The advent wreath

First Sunday of Advent

Reading: Luke 1 -2

Theme: Advent



Information for the teacher:

Advent marks the beginning of the church year. It is the 4 week season before Christmas observed in many churches as a time of joyful, expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus. During our lessons in the Old Testament this year we have learnt how Israel yearned for a king or a saviour to lead and save them from their oppressors. During Advent, we prepare our hearts for Jesus – our eternal king and saviour.

For centuries, the Advent wreath has been the centrepiece of many Anglican churches as we prepare for Christmas. The wreath is circular, made of evergreens and consisting of five candles - three purple, one pink and one white – the white candle is placed in the centre of the wreath. Starting on the first Sunday of Advent, one candle is lit each week, in a very particular order, until all five candles are aflame on Christmas Day.

As with so many other traditions within the Anglican Church, the Advent wreath is steeped in symbolism, which adds richness to our faith and worship - the evergreens are everlasting, reminding us of eternal life, and a circle has no beginning and no end - God is eternal -God never had a beginning and will never have an end!

The purple candles remind us that Advent is a time of reflection and penance as we prepare our hearts for Christmas. It is also the colour of royalty, reminding us that Jesus is our King. (Some churches prefer to use blue instead of purple candles during advent - blue represents hope, and that is precisely what Advent promises!) The pink candle reminds us of the joy of Christmas. The white candle is the Christ Candle, lit on Christmas Day, a symbol of purity and celebration as we remember the pure child born into the world to save us from our sins. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and is placed in the centre of the wreath to remind us that Jesus is at the centre of the Christmas story and should also be at the centre of our lives.

In addition to the candles having a specific colour, further meanings have been given to each of the candles of the advent wreath. Different traditions have different meanings for each candle – for this lesson we have chosen the candles to be symbols of the hope, joy, love and peace that the Christ child brought into this world.

And so on the **first** Sunday of Advent, a **purple** candle is lit in remembrance of the **prophets** and as a symbol of **hope** – the coming Messiah had been looked toward with great anticipation, foretold by the ancient prophets. The **second** candle to be lit is also **purple**, representing **Bethlehem** and becoming a symbol of **love**. It was in Bethlehem, where the love of God was played out in a child resting in a manger. The **third** candle is **pink**, representing the **shepherds** and depicting **joy**. It was to the shepherds that the heavenly chorus lit up the sky as they brought “tidings of great joy” that the Saviour of the world was born. The **fourth** candle is **purple** once again, representing the **angels** and becoming a symbol of **peace**. “Peace on earth to all on whom the Lord’s favour rests”, the angels proclaimed! Finally, the **fifth** candle is the **Christ** candle. This candle is **white**, glorious in its purity and splendour, and the centre of the celebration of the advent story.

And so this advent, may we all find our anchor in the symbols of Advent which remind us of what this Season truly promises – a blue hope for the world, a purple peace for our Spirit, a rose coloured joy in our lives, discovered in the glorious white of Jesus Christ. Amen



Lesson Suggestions:

The same lesson plan has been provided for both younger and older children. It is important that you create a lesson that suits your particular class – keep the story and words very simple for the very young children and perhaps just refer to Advent as the time before Christmas.

Lesson Objectives:

- To learn about the Christmas story
- To know that the time before Christmas is known as Advent – it is a time to prepare for the celebration of Christmas
- To actively participate in this time before Christmas by making an advent wreath
- To feel excitement and anticipation for Christmas Day



Bible Story and discussion:

For this lesson you will need to have an Advent wreath of some form in your class. The advent wreath should preferably be made of greenery and candles that can be lit, as shown in the diagram below, but if this is not possible, ideas for making an advent wreath from paper can be found at the end of this lesson. The paper wreath should be made so that the “candles” can be added to the wreath as you discuss the meaning/significance of each candle.



The advent candles are symbols of hope, love, joy and peace – these are quite difficult concepts for the younger children to understand, and so a picture to do with the Christmas story has been included in this lesson for each week in Advent, to help the children more fully understand the meaning of Advent. These pictures are specifically intended for the younger children, but the older children may also enjoy “building up” the Christmas story over the weeks leading to Christmas.

And so, in addition to lighting the advent wreath candle each week, the children can add the picture which is linked to that week –they can stick the picture to a wall and slowly build up the nativity scene over the weeks leading up to Christmas. These pictures can be found at the end of this lesson.

If possible, make use of musical instruments, such as bells and tambourines as you sing the well known Christmas Carols in this lesson.



Discussion:

- Ask the children to which special day of the year we are close to? (*Christmas*)
- Discuss with them that the time before Christmas is known as Advent. The first Sunday of Advent is the start of the new church year. During this time, we get ready for Christmas. What do we do to get ready for Christmas? (*Put up the Christmas tree; buy presents; tidy the house; make Christmas decorations; sing Christmas carols; send Christmas cards*)
- How do you feel when you get close to Christmas?
- During the time before Christmas, we get ourselves ready for Jesus. How do you think you can do this?
- The Church uses the Advent wreath to help us remember the Christmas story and to get us ready for Christmas Day. In what ways could making an Advent wreath help you to get ready for Christmas?

Refer the children to the Christmas wreath in your class

- Discuss with the older children that the Advent wreath is one of the many symbols of the Anglican Church. Symbols are a visual reminder of our faith and what we believe. The Advent wreath is a circle made of everlasting greenery. What do you think this may symbolise? (*A circle has no beginning and no end. The wreath therefore reminds us that God is eternal – God never had a beginning and will never have an end! The evergreens remind us of everlasting life.*)
- How many candles do you see? (*Five. Three are purple; one is pink and one is white*)
- Why do you think there are three **purple** candles? (*If you discussed the colours associated with the seasons of the church earlier this year, the children may be able to tell you that purple is the symbol for royalty – we are getting ready to celebrate the birthday of a king. For the older children also discuss that purple is the colour of sadness – during this time we think of all the bad things we have thought or said – we make our hearts clean.*)
- The **pink** candle is a symbol of joy – we are waiting and getting ready for the birthday of Jesus – Christmas is a happy time!
- What do you think the **white** candle is a symbol of? (*This candle will only be lit on Christmas Day and reminds us of Jesus Christ – pure and sinless*)
- While we wait for Christmas Day, we will light a candle each Sunday. As today is the first Sunday in Advent, we will light our first candle.
- So the **first candle** to be lit is one of the purple candles. With each candle we have a picture of something to remind us of the Christmas story. Our picture for the first candle is a star. Who can tell us about the star in the Christmas story? (*A star was seen in the sky by some wise men. People had been looking out for this star for many years. God had promised a Saviour for the world – a Saviour to save God’s people from their oppressors – and a star would be the sign of the Saviour’s birth*)
- So, the star is a star of hope! Why do you think this is? Do you like seeing the stars? Are they a sign of hope for you? In what ways are they a sign of hope for you?
- Many people had foretold of Jesus’ birth and had waited in expectation for the saviour of the world – these people were known as prophets. Do you know the names of some of the prophets? (*Isaiah, Elijah and John the Baptist.*)
- John the Baptist spoke about Jesus. What can you remember about John?
- And so the first candle is known as the **candle of hope** – a hope in God who keeps promises made to us.



- Let's now discuss the other candles in the wreath. The **second candle** is also purple. It should only be lit next week but we will light it today as we continue to learn about the story of Christmas. The picture that goes with this candle is a picture of Mary and Joseph in the stable in Bethlehem.
- The star from the first week is above the stable. What do you know about Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem? (*Mary and Joseph had made their way to Bethlehem because all people had to go to their home town to be counted. It was in Bethlehem in a stable that baby Jesus was born.*)
- When we light this candle, we remember how Mary and Joseph, and the whole world waited for the birth of baby Jesus – God's gift to the world – God's gift of love.
- And so, the second candle is known as the **candle of love**.



- The **third candle** is pink – it will only be lit in two weeks time, but we will light it today, as we learn about the Christmas story. Do you remember what the pink candle reminds us of? (*Joy! – happiness at the news of Jesus birth*)
- The picture that goes with this candle is a picture of the shepherd. The shepherds were filled with joy as the angels told them the good news of baby Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:11)
- Who else was filled with great joy at the news of baby Jesus? (*Mary had also sung with great joy at the news that she was to have a baby who would be a saviour. We too, are filled with joy each year as we get ready for Christmas*)
- And so, the third candle is the **candle of joy**.



- The **fourth candle** is a purple candle. It will be lit in four weeks time, but we will light it today as we learn about the Christmas story. The picture that goes with this story is a picture of the angels. Where in the Christmas story do we learn about angels? (*An angel appeared to Mary to tell her that she was to have a baby. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream to tell him that he was to take Mary as his wife and that she would give birth to a son, and he was to name the baby Jesus. It was also the angels who spread the news of Jesus' birth – they said to the shepherds, "Peace on Earth!"*)
- And so the fourth candle is the **candle of peace**.



- The **last candle** to be lit is the white candle. When do you think this candle will be lit? (*On Christmas Day*)
- What picture do you think will go with this candle? (*A picture of baby Jesus, born on Christmas Day*)
- Christmas Day is a day of great celebration – the colour that our church uses for days of celebration is white. The white also reminds us of the pure child who was born into the world to save us from our sins.
- **The Christ** candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and is placed in the centre of the wreath to remind us that Jesus is at the centre of the Christmas story and should also be at the centre of our lives.

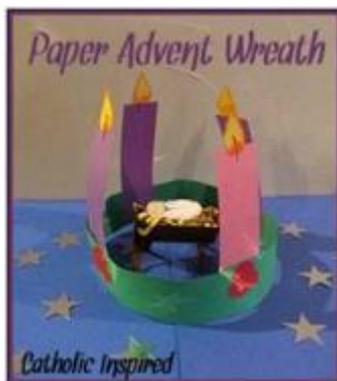


Sing:



Crafts:

1. Children can make an advent wreath. They can use greenery and real candles but for safety the candles should not be lit without adult supervision.



One can make an Advent Wreath out of paper. There is one to colour in at the end of this lesson. The children can add the words hope, love, joy and peace to the candles. (You will need to give them another candle to paste onto the page to represent the Christ Candle). It is suggested that the children do not attach the candles to this wreath during the lesson - the children can stick the wreath to a wall when they get home and add just the first candle to the wreath for today. Next week they will add the second candle to the wreath, and so they will continue to add to the wreath until Christmas Day.

A number of other ideas for making a wreath can be found below. A further suggestion is to stick green tinsel or green leaves to a paper plate, and then attach paper candles – the “candles” can be made out of empty toilet rolls.

2. The children can colour in the pictures of the nativity scene found at the end of this lesson. It is recommended that you give each child a packet to put in all the pictures of the Christmas story and possibly the paper candles of the advent wreath in the above craft. A simple instruction sheet should also be added to this pack for an older person to help the children with this activity. An example of such an instruction sheet is shown below.

The Advent Wreath

The Advent Wreath has been a tradition of the Anglican Church for centuries. It is to help us prepare for Christmas and is a wonderful opportunity for families to gather each Sunday in prayer to light another candle on the wreath. Some call it the *Circle of Love*, referring to both the Advent Wreath and the family gathered around it. Here the children are given an opportunity to explore God's message of hope, joy, peace and love.

Each Sunday, along with discussing the candle for that week, discuss part of the Christmas story with your child. Below you will find instructions as to which candle to light each week, as well as a picture of the Christmas story linked to the theme for the week. The child will enjoy "building up" the Christmas story over the weeks leading to Christmas.

Week 1: The **purple candle of hope** and a picture of a **star**. A star was seen in the sky by some wise men. People had been looking out for this star for many years. God had promised a Saviour for the world and a star would be the sign of the Saviour's birth. And so the star is a symbol of hope and the first candle is the candle of hope.

Week 2: The **purple candle of love** and a picture of **Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem**. Mary and Joseph had made their way to Bethlehem. It was in Bethlehem that Mary and Joseph, and the whole world waited for the birth of baby Jesus – God's gift to the world – God's gift of love. And so the second candle is known as the candle of love.

Week 3: The **pink candle of joy** and a picture of a **shepherd**. The shepherds were filled with joy as the angels told them the good news of baby Jesus' birth. We too, are filled with joy each year as we get ready for Christmas. And so the third candle is the candle of joy.

Week 4: The **purple candle of peace** and a picture of an **angel**. It was the angels who spread the good news of Jesus' birth and said, "Peace on earth to all on whom the Lord's favour rests!" And so the fourth candle is the candle of peace

Christmas Day: The **white Christ candle** and a picture of **baby Jesus**. Today we remember the birth of baby Jesus – it is a day of celebration as we remember the pure child born into the world to save us from our sins. This candle also reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world and is placed in the centre of the wreath to remind us that Jesus is at the centre of the Christmas story and should also be at the centre of our lives.



Activities:

1. If you have a nativity scene, the younger children will enjoy playing with this.
2. Play the game Angels and shepherds: Divide the children into 2 groups – angels and shepherds. The two groups start the game at different sides of a play area. If the teacher shouts "Angels", the angels need to get to the other side of the play area. If an angel is caught by a shepherd, the angel now becomes a shepherd. If the teacher shouts, "Christmas", everyone has to sit down – the last child, or last few children standing depending on the size of your group, are "out".
3. The older children can play Advent Bingo to remind themselves of this lesson. Instructions on how to play this game can be found at the end of the lesson



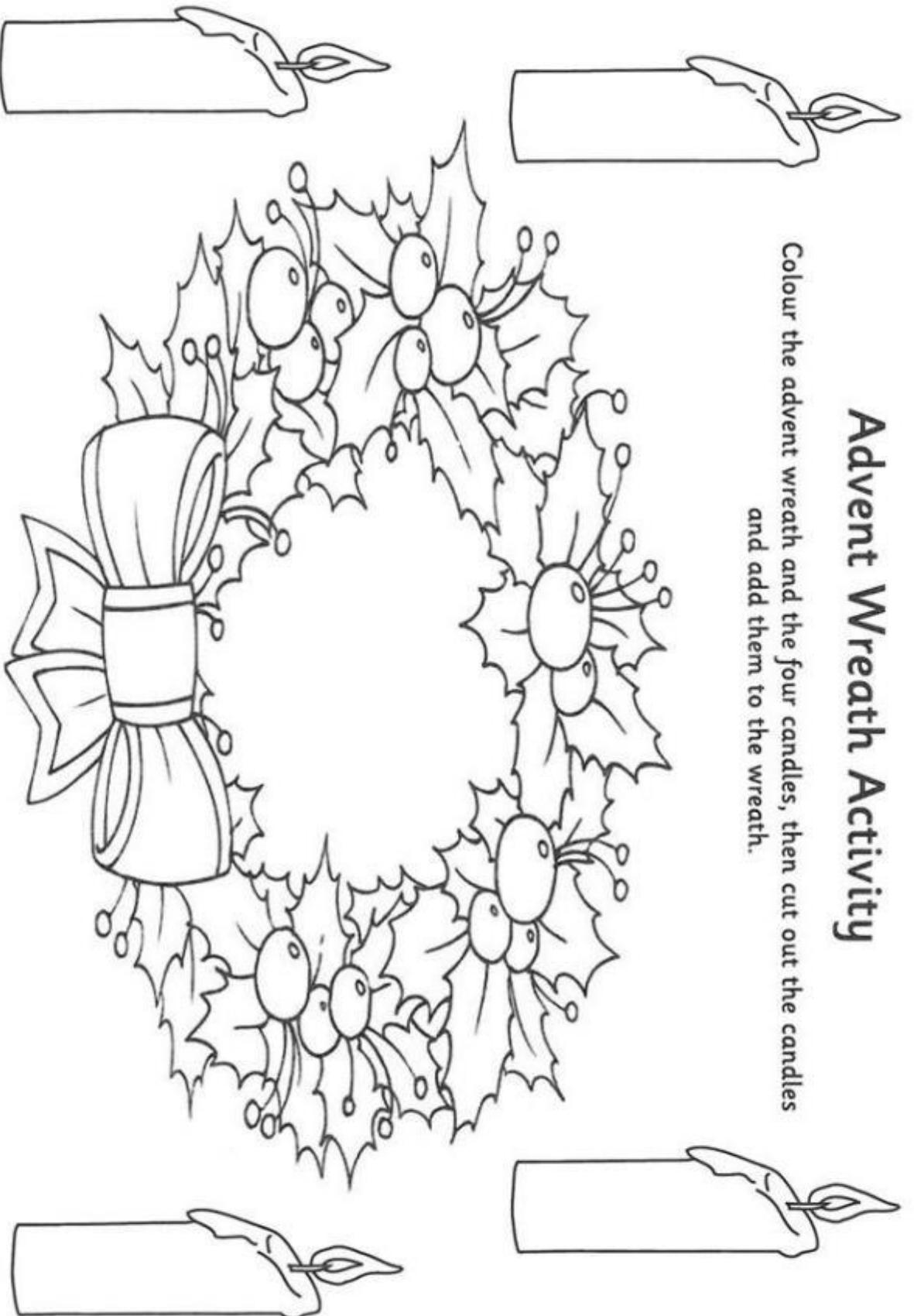
Prayer: Dear God, we thank you for your great **love** for us. We thank you that you showed us your love by sending your Son, Jesus, into the world to save us. May we share in the **joy** of Mary and the shepherds as we re-live the Christmas Story. May we join in with the angels spreading God's message of **peace** on Earth and may we also share in the **hope** of many people gone before us that you always keep your promises. Finally, may we remember that at the centre of Christmas and our lives is the glorious story of Jesus Christ. Amen

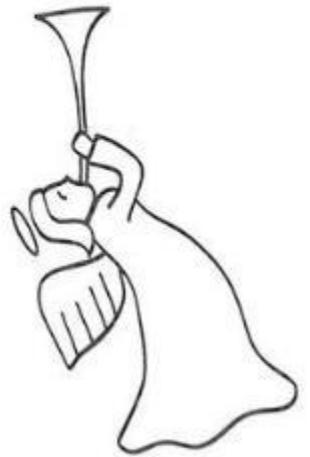
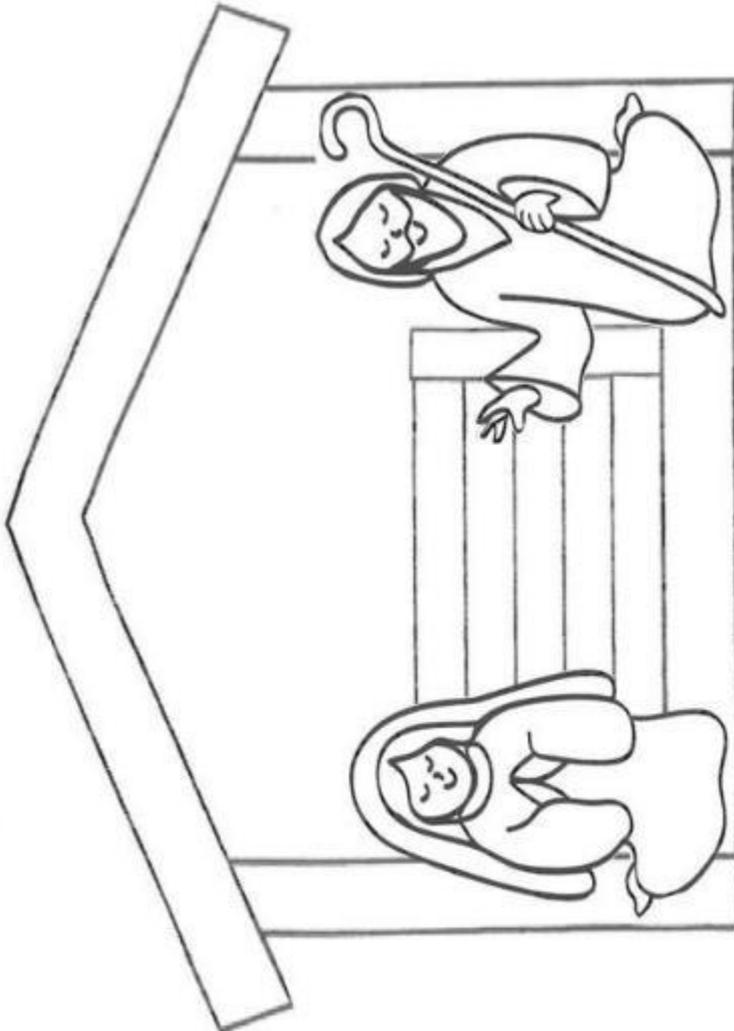
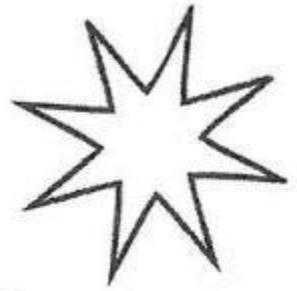
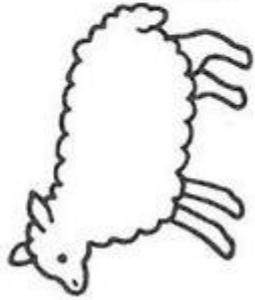
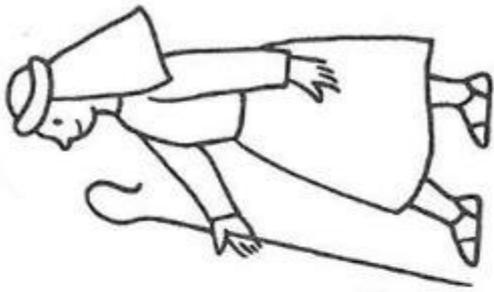
References:

<http://www.loyolapress.com/advent-bingo-activity-center.htm>
www.catholicmom.com/lesson_plan.advent

Advent Wreath Activity

Colour the advent wreath and the four candles, then cut out the candles and add them to the wreath.





Advent Bingo

For this game, each child is given a card with 9 of the answers to the questions found below - an example of such a card can be found at the bottom of the page. These cards should be prepared by the teacher before the lesson. Each card should be different.

The teacher then calls out one of the questions as shown below – to make it more random, cut the questions into separate strips, and then pull a question from a “hat”. If the answer to the question is on a child’s card, they can colour in the block with the correct answer.

The first child to colour in all 9 blocks on their card is the winner. The child then shouts out, “BINGO!”

Advent Bingo Questions:

1. Which Church Season comes just before Christmas? (*Advent*)
2. What does the word “Advent” mean? (*Coming*)
3. During Advent, we prepare for Jesus Christ to come into our _____ for Christmas. (*hearts*)
4. The first Sunday of Advent begins a new Church _____. (*Year*)
5. How many weeks does Advent last? (*Four*)
6. The circle of green leaves on an Advent wreath reminds us that God’s love is _____ what? (*eternal*)
7. How many candles on the Advent wreath are purple? (*Three*)
8. This colour candles is placed at the centre of the Advent wreath to remind us that Jesus is the centre of Christmas and should also be the centre of our lives (*White*)
9. The purple candles remind us that Advent is a time of _____. (*penance*)
10. The purple candles are also as symbol of _____ - Jesus is our king. (*royalty*)
11. What colour candle is lit during the first week of Advent? (*Violet*)
12. What does the first candle of the Advent wreath symbolize? (*Hope*)
13. What does the second candle of the Advent Wreath symbolize? (*Love*)
14. What colour candle is lit during third week of Advent? (*Pink*)
15. What does the third candle of the Advent Wreath symbolize? (*Joy*)
16. What does the fourth candle of the Advent Wreath symbolize? (*Peace*)
17. What colour candle is lit on Christmas Day? (*White*)
18. The white candle symbolizes the arrival of Christ, the _____ of the world. (*Light*)
19. On which day do we celebrate the birthday of Jesus? (*Christmas*)
20. During Advent, we remember God’s _____ to send our Saviour, Jesus (*promise*)
21. God sent special people to remind everyone that God would keep his promises of love. We hear readings from the Bible about these people in church during Advent. Who are these people? (*prophets*)
22. Which prophet from the Old Testament predicted the coming of the Saviour? (*Isaiah*)
23. Who lived in the desert, wore clothes made of camel’s hair, ate locusts and honey? This person also announced the coming of Jesus into the world? (*John the Baptist*)
24. Which angel announced to Mary that God had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus? (*Gabriel*)
25. Who was the cousin of Mary who was also the mother of John the Baptist? (*Elizabeth*)
26. Who did an angel visit in a dream, saying “Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife”? (*Joseph*)

Joseph	White	Four
Joy	Coming	Promise
Eternal	Isaiah	Royalty

Christmas

Second Sunday in Advent

Readings: Luke 1:26 -38, Matt 1:18 -24, Luke 2: 1-7, Luke 2:8-20, Matt2:1-12

Theme: God's gift of love

Memory verses: Younger Children- "I bring you good news of great joy, Jesus is born in Bethlehem".
(Luke 2:10-11)



Information for the teacher:

Long before Christmas the shops start to put up Christmas trees and decorations. They advertise and encourage people to spend money. Often this means that Christmas becomes a very busy time with lots of shopping and we can forget the important thing that Christmas is the day Jesus was born. Christmas is the time that we celebrate that God became human and lived among humans, showing us a new way of living and loving and teaching us that God is Love.

However, amidst all the celebrations Jesus IS present, because Christmas is all about the Incarnation. The **Incarnation** means that when Jesus was born, God became human. He was not part human and part God; he was completely human and completely God- **Emmanuel**- God with us. Jesus being born as one of us means that we have God with us in person to help us live good lives, make right decisions and guide us through tricky situations. It is not that we won't go wrong anymore, but it does mean that we can always be in touch with The One who can help us.

Christmas is about God coming to be with us; Jesus being born as a human baby is God saying to all of us, "I love you!" And so let us enjoy the festivities of Christmas, but let us not lose focus on the presence of Christ in Christmas.



Attention Grabber:

Begin by asking the children if they have ever received an invitation. To what were they invited?

Ask them how they might get an invitation - by email, cell phone, word of mouth, letter etc.

We receive invitations for all sorts of occasions, birthdays, weddings - we may be invited to participate in something. (Have a few invitations ready to show the children)

You may have handed out an invitation to Jesus' birthday party last week, as suggested in last week's lesson. If this is the case, then draw their attention to that invitation.

Today we are going to hear about some people who had received very special invitations - Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. It was an invitation to be part of God's special plan which was to show the world how much God loves them by giving them the gift of Jesus.

Ask the children how they think Mary, Joseph and the shepherds received the invitation - allow time for interaction. Then go on to say they received the invitation from an angel to be part of God's plan.



Bible Story: The Birth of Jesus

As you tell this story, make use of a nativity scene. Information on a nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson. You may have your own nativity scene or your church may have one that you can borrow. Alternatively, the characters of the nativity scene can be found at the end of this lesson. You may like to recreate the nativity scene before you start the lesson – see the children's craft idea for today. Or, you may want to bring out the characters one at a time, asking the children who each of the characters are and what they know about them.

Familiarise yourself with the Christmas story by reading the following passages beforehand. The important points to include when telling the story can be found below.

Luke 1:26-38: An angel promises the birth of Jesus to Mary

Mary was from Nazareth and engaged to Joseph. The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary to give her an important message – God had chosen Mary to have a very special baby – He would be God's son. He would be a king and his kingdom would have no end. How must Mary have felt at this news?

Matt 1:18 -25: An angel appears to Joseph

Joseph, a carpenter, was engaged to Mary. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary was to have a baby. He must not be afraid as the Holy Spirit made this happen. He was to marry Mary and name the baby, "Jesus". How must Joseph have felt at this news?

Luke 2:1- 7: The birth of Baby Jesus

Joseph and Mary had to travel to Bethlehem – a census was taking place and everyone had to go back to their home town. While they were in Bethlehem, Baby Jesus was born. There was no room for them at the inn, so baby Jesus was wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger. (Note that there is no mention of a donkey in the bible, but the children may still like to mention it as part of the story.)

Luke 2:8-20: The shepherds visit Jesus.

There were shepherds in the hills nearby, looking after their sheep. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared to them and they were terrified. The angel told them to not be afraid for the angel brought good news of great joy. A baby had been born in the town of Bethlehem who was to be the saviour of the world. Then a whole group of angels appeared, praising God. The shepherds rushed to Bethlehem to find the new born babe. How do you think the shepherds felt about this news?

Matt 2:1-12: The wise men from the East

Some wise men from the East saw a star and knew that Jesus had been born. They followed the star until it stopped over the place where the baby was. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. (You may want to mention that the wise men only visited Jesus much later, as discussed in the first lesson this year.)



Discussion:

1. Who were all invited to share in the birth of Jesus? (*Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men*)
2. Did everyone say “yes” to the invitation?
3. We celebrate Jesus’ birthday every year. Who knows when we do this? (*At Christmas*)
4. Who knows why we give presents at Christmas? (*Because Jesus is God’s gift to us*)
5. Why did God give us the gift of Jesus? (*Because God loves us!*)
6. You have been given an invitation to celebrate Jesus’ birthday. What are the things that make you forget it is Jesus' birthday? What helps you to remember?
7. When we go to a party we also give a present. Just as God has given us the gift of Jesus because He loves us, God would like us to give the gift of love to others. How can we do this?



Songs: The children can listen to Christmas carols as they make their Christmas decorations.



Prayer: Christmas is a time of great celebration. In all that we do as we get ready for this special day, may we be reminded of the Christmas story – of that little baby boy born in a manger. May this time be one of great joy and peace, and may the love of God shine through. Amen

References:

www.catholicnewsagency.com>advent

What do you know about Christmas?

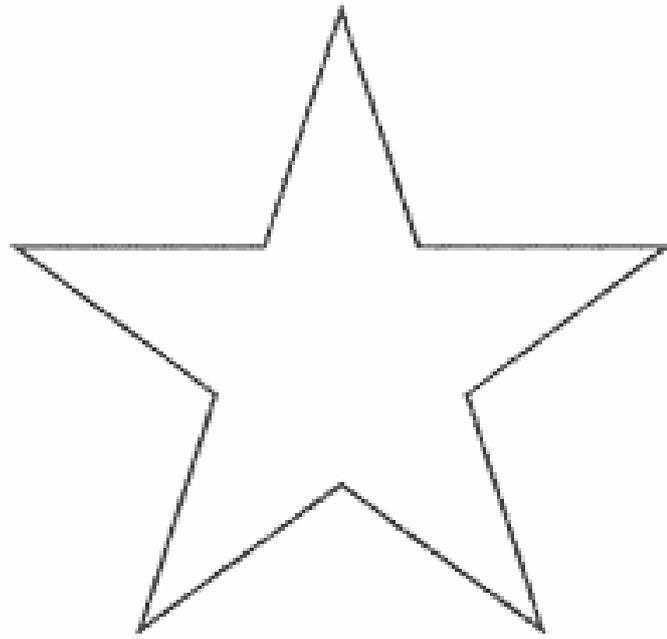
Match the words in column A with Column B

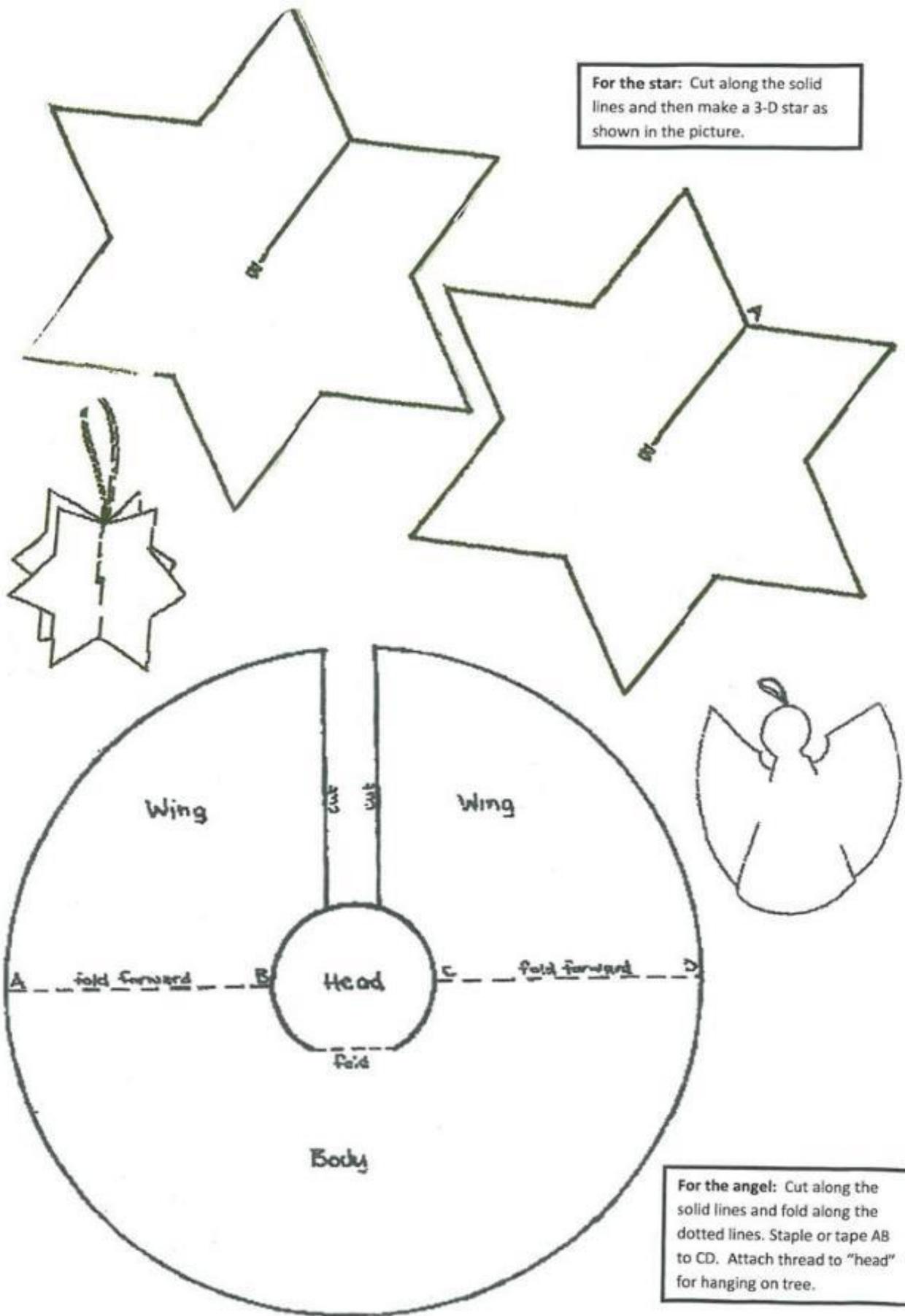
Column A

- Joseph
- Mary
- Shepherds
- John the Baptist
- Nativity
- Wise men
- Bethlehem
- Star
- Herod
- Gabriel

Column B

- Mother of Jesus
- King who wanted to kill Jesus
- Angel who visited Mary
- Led the three wise men to Jesus
- Heard about Jesus from the angels
- Town where Jesus was born
- Followed the star
- Husband of Mary
- Birth of Jesus
- Cousin of Jesus





For the star: Cut along the solid lines and then make a 3-D star as shown in the picture.

For the angel: Cut along the solid lines and fold along the dotted lines. Staple or tape AB to CD. Attach thread to "head" for hanging on tree.

