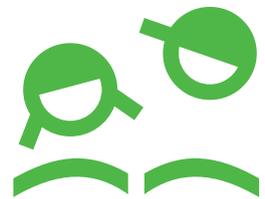




SUNDAY SCHOOL RESOURCES

# The gospel



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# Introduction

Welcome to the St Helen's, Bishopsgate Sunday school material!

Psalm 1 speaks of the blessed man whose delight is in the law of the Lord. He meditates on it day and night, and like a tree planted by streams of water, yields fruit and does not wither.

Our prayer for the families at St Helen's is that each individual and the family collective would be those who are fed and nourished by the word of God, as they understand God's salvation plan and get to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following Sunday school material has been produced to be a support to parents and the church family in the discipling of their children; and is now made publically available to the wider church with these aims in mind.

We hope it might be of some use in your proclamation of the gospel to the next generation and the furtherance of the kingdom. Let's be those who live out Psalm 78, teaching our children 'so that they should set their hope in God'.

This material has been produced with the help of numerous staff, associates, and leaders at St Helen's—a massive thanks to all who have been involved over the years.

## **INCLUDED IN THIS MATERIAL:**

- Session outlines      A rough guide to how a session might run.
- Series overview      A description of the teaching series.
- Bible stories/talks    Full scripts that ideally are modified.
- Discussion studies    Example studies for ages 5–11.
- Activities              Games, dramas, crafts, and memory verse activities.
- Songs and rhymes     Written for the specific session or suggestions of published songs.
- Worksheets            To be done at home, to aid parents' conversation with their children.
- 'How to' sheets        Detailed explanation on how to run the components of each session.

## **BIBLE VERSION**

Bible talks are best used with the NIV 2011 as this is the version in mind when verses are read.

## **BEFORE WE BEGIN — OUR BIG PRINCIPLES**

### 1. God speaks

We believe that God speaks powerfully by his Holy Spirit through his word, the Bible. He has told us everything we need to know to be saved and to live rightly before him. This is why we put the Bible at the centre of this material; we want the children to hear what God says and allow God's spirit to write it on their hearts.

### 2. We pray

Talking to our Father in heaven is vital. Amazingly, God allows us to get involved in building his kingdom by speaking his words. But only God gives the growth. Only he helps us and the children really understand what he says and change our hearts to follow him. Therefore we pray to express our dependence on God and to implore him to be at work as he uses our humble efforts to grow his kingdom.

### 3. Hearts matter most

When we teach the Bible it is easy to teach it like a manual of moral wisdom, teaching a set of behaviours to be observed. But the Bible is not a manual; it is a story, the story of God restoring relationship with his people who have rebelled against him through the Lord Jesus Christ. Our desire is to thrill their hearts with who God is and what he has done through his Son. Behaviour might then change, but only because of a love for our Lord and faith in him.

### 4. We partner with parents

There is dual responsibility for a child's discipleship. Parents, ideally fathers, are primarily responsible in bringing their children up in the training and instruction of the Lord. The church family, including any children's ministry, takes a supporting role in this. That which is done in church is ideally there to aid that which is done in the home.

### 5. We are inflexible on the inflexibles and flexible on the flexibles

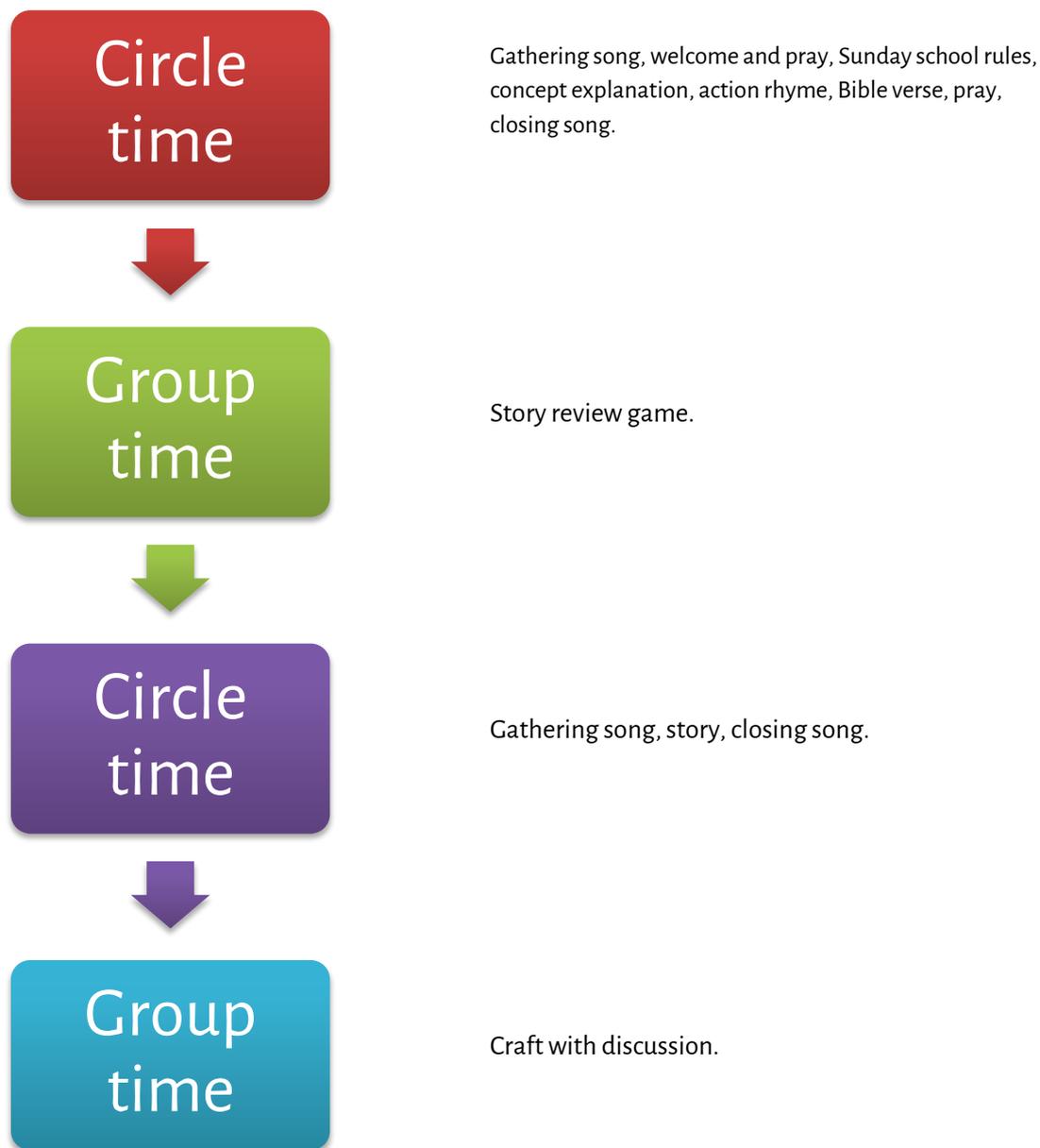
The Bible prescribes the teaching of the word by believing parents and the church family to their children. It does not explicitly prescribe practically 'how' this is to happen. 'How' we go about discipling children becomes a question of pragmatics. Assuming we are inflexible on what the Bible does prescribe, there is great freedom, which we can use to be flexible on what the Bible is silent on. In the proclamation of the gospel to the next generation, our model of ministry using the following material has been fruitful for the families at St. Helen's.

### 6. We train

We aim to multiply our ministry by training and mobilising others in gospel proclamation. The result is fourfold: firstly, leaders entrusted with the gospel and trained for a lifetime of ministry, secondly, children clearly hearing and being fed, thirdly, the same children being trained for a lifetime of ministry, fourthly, the generation after them hearing and responding to the gospel.

## Pre-school age (3–5s) session outline

The 3–5s session outline is just a guide; you may want to change it to fit your children/situation. A detailed 'How to' sheet to guide you through the session can be found on page 130. Here is a basic outline with suggested activities.



## School age (5–11s) session outline

The below outline is just a guide, you may want to change it to fit your children/situation. The main thing is the Bible talk and the small group discussion, don't get rid of these!



Use this time as you wish. Introduce the big idea through a quick game, picture or question. (In order to affirm and encourage home discipleship, some of this time could be used as a 'sharing' time. Children could share with the group things they've been looking at and thinking about at home.)

A full script Bible talk is provided. A leader may use this in a number of ways: speak directly from the script, modify the talk, or write their own using this as an example. In any case the leader should add illustrations, interactions, readings, and props as appropriate. **'How to' page available on p134**

To cement the teaching and further apply, break down into smaller age appropriate groups for discussion. Example studies are provided; however, train yourself and your leaders to write your own. **'How to' pages available on p135 and p138**

Continue in small groups to complete one of the four possible activities, doing a different one each week. Two example activities are given in the material. Feel free to use them or come up with your own. **'How to' pages for all four activities available on p140–144.**

All groups come back together. You may wish to use this time to recap the 'big idea', or to sing, or if one of the small groups has prepared a drama this is a good time to perform it.

## Series overview

In this gospel overview, we are aiming to show the children the core truths of the Christian gospel by looking at a selection of passages from all over the Bible. No gospel overview is perfect or completely comprehensive, however we have aimed to select passages that teach the children a simple and yet solid understanding of the main story line of the Bible—God’s rescue plan for sinful man through his son Jesus Christ.

Applying the Bible to children can be difficult, it can be particularly hard to avoid giving children a list of things they should do. As we go through the core truths of the gospel it should be plain to the children (and us) that ‘doing things’ does not achieve anything, only Jesus can secure salvation for sinners, even believing and faith are God’s job really. Instead we hope that the minds of the children will be changed, they will view themselves and God differently. We hope they will love and appreciate God and his gospel more as they see how wonderful and needed salvation through Jesus Christ is.

### PRE-SCHOOL: 12 SESSIONS FOR 3–5 YEAR OLDS

Week	Lesson	Concept	Passage	Story
1	1	God made us Praise God	Genesis 2	God—he made us (and everything else)
2				
3	2	We sin against God Sorry, God	Genesis 3	Us—we sin against God
4				
5	3	Jesus died for sinners like us Thank you God	Mark 15	Jesus—he died for sinners like us
6				
7	4	Jesus came alive for sinners like us Thank you God	John 20	Jesus—he came alive for sinners like us
8				
9	5	God forgives all who trust in Jesus Please God	Luke 18:9–14	Us—God forgives all who trust in Jesus
10				
11	6	All who trust in Jesus will live for ever and ever in a wonderful new world	Revelation 21–22	So what?—All who trust in Jesus will live for ever and ever in a wonderful new world
12				

**SCHOOL AGE: 12 SESSIONS FOR 5–11 YEAR OLDS**

Week	Passage	Summary	Talk
1	Genesis 2	God—who is God?	Because God made us, he owns us
2	Joshua 7		Because God is righteous, he cannot ignore wrongdoing
3	Genesis 3	Us—why do we need to be saved?	We are rebels against God
4	Romans 3:9–20		We are all unrighteous before God
5	1 John 2:1b	Jesus—what has God done to save us?	Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life, for us
6	Luke 23		Jesus died a sinner’s death, for us
7	Philippians 2:9–11		Jesus was raised to life again, for us
8	Romans 5:6–8		The loving swap
9	Luke 18:9–14	Us—how do we benefit from what God has done for us?	Repentance: we need God’s mercy
10	Romans 4		Faith: we are justified by faith
11	Matthew 25	So what? Where will we go in the end?	God’s judgement is coming
12	Revelation 21–22		The new creation

The memory verse for this series is Romans 1:16

## Week 1

### Pre-school age: Genesis 2

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

(The following concept is the big teaching point of the session. Explain the concept, helping the children understand what it means. Think about which words they may not understand. Think about how you can best explain this concept with illustrations, or questions, or pictures, or examples.)

- God made us

#### **ACTION RHYME**

(Singing with actions is a great way to cement in and remember what one has been learning. Come up with actions for the following rhyme. Maybe you'll want to sing it with different voices eg quiet and loud.)

\* To the tune of 'My God is so big'

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,  
There's nothing that he cannot do  
The mountains are his, the valleys are his,  
And he made me and you too.  
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,  
There's nothing my God cannot do!

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

(Reading the following verse from the bible and linking it with the concept does two things: 1. it helps the children see that what is being said is from the bible, and 2. it helps the children become familiar with the ideas and words that the talk will expand on. This familiarity will help them process the information more efficiently and take more in.)

'I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Psalm 139:14a

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

(Games are a light and fun way to re-enforce the teaching concept. Practice the concept together until all the children are confident saying it from memory, and then play the following game.)

'Chinese whispers'

1. Gather the children into a circle.

2. Whisper the concept in a child's ear.
3. They in turn then turn to the person next to them and whisper the concept into their ear.
4. Mix things up by passing the concept in different orders or by passing a different sentence, eg 'God made the trees', 'God made the stars', 'God made you'...

### **STORY: GOD — HE MADE US (AND EVERYTHING ELSE)**

(The following is a short talk on the passage. Sunday school leaders use this talk material in a number of ways. Sometimes they will read it out using visuals and audience participation. Sometimes they will adapt it to focus on a particular idea or application. Sometimes they will write their own talk using this one as an example of how to write a talk from the given passage.)

[Note—it is important that when we teach that 'God made us' the emphasis needs to be on **God** not on **us**. We want to show that God is great and powerful and so on and that **this God** made us. We need to talk in a way that shows the children that everything doesn't revolve around them, but around God.]

This term we are going to be hearing some very, very good news. This good news starts with God. God is big and strong and mighty, there's nothing that he cannot do. God made everything in the whole world: mountains, valleys, stars, trees, birds, and flowers. God made everything including me and you. We're going to hear from the Bible the story of when God made the first ever people.

In the Bible God tells us that when he made the world and everything in it, he also made a special garden. This was a very special garden. It was better than any garden you have ever seen. God filled the special garden with lovely trees. There were rivers running through the special garden. Everything was full of life. Everything looked very pretty. The garden showed how good and how kind God is. This was the best place ever—and it was made by God.

The first man in the world was called Adam. God made Adam and he put him into the special garden. God told Adam to work in the garden to look after it. What a great job Adam had! He could stay in the garden all day and see all the lovely trees and plants and rivers and animals. Adam could eat fruit from the trees and have a wonderful time. God did say that of all the many trees in the garden there was just one tree that Adam was not to eat from. God was so kind to Adam and so generous with what he gave Adam.

God did not leave Adam all alone in the garden. He also made Eve, the first woman, to help Adam work in the garden. Everything was wonderful and made exactly as God wanted. Adam and Eve were both made by God.

Every person is made by God. The same big and strong and mighty God who made Adam and Eve made you and me. The same kind and generous and wonderful God who gave Adam and Eve the special garden made us too. God made [point at a child and say their name—repeat a few times]. God made all of us.

We should tell God how great he is! We should praise him. Let's do that now. [End by praising God for how great he is to have made everything]

### **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

(Craft time is an opportunity to discuss the story with the children. Make sure leaders are well spread among the children and are talking to the children about the story, asking them questions about what they have heard, what can they remember, what does it mean for them.)

Colour in the following sketch.



## School age: Genesis 2

### **BECAUSE GOD MADE US, HE OWNS US**

(The following is a short talk on the passage. Sunday school leaders use this talk material in a number of ways. Sometimes they will read it out using visuals and audience participation. Sometimes they will adapt it to focus on a particular idea or application. Sometimes they will write their own talk using this one as an example of how to write a talk from the given passage.)

To help us think about our first lesson I want to show you this: [a homemade plasticine figure] I made this. I made it with my own hands. I made it in my own time. I made it using things that belong to me. So, who do you think this belong to and why? [Take answers from the children]

Ok. Now let's do some imagining. Imagine that I could make this little man come alive. Imagine I could breathe life into him so that this little man could walk and talk and run and jump. I made him. I have now made him come alive. So, who do you think he belongs to now? [Take answers from the children]

If I could make him come alive, then he would still be mine. I would want to look after him well. I would want to care for him and protect him from harm. I would want to give good things to him. We would be good friends. I would want him to know what was good for him and what was not. Because I made him, I would own him and know what was best for him. We'll think more about this in a moment.

First we need to learn a word. That word is gospel. It's probably a word you have heard many times. The word gospel just means 'good news', the kind of good news that you get really excited about, the kind of good news you want to tell everyone about. This term is all about the gospel, the good news. This term we are going to hear the best good news, the best gospel, the world has ever heard. It is good news from God. It is good news from God about Jesus. It is good news from God about Jesus which tells us how we can be saved. This good news, this gospel, starts with God. Here's the first thing we need to know about God: God is the creator.

God is the Creator. This means God made everything. We hear all about it in the first chapter of the Bible. Genesis chapter 1 verse 1 says, 'In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.' God made all kinds of things. You will have heard many times about how God made the world. You will have heard before about when God made the first people on earth. God made Adam and Eve the first ever human beings. God made us too. Every person alive has been made by God the Creator. But I want to tell you something that you might not have heard so much. Are you listening? This is what we need to hear about God: Because God made us, he owns us. Because God made us, he owns us. It's a bit like things are with my plasticine figure. Remember, we said that because I made the figure I own him. I made him using things that belong to me, so I own him. Because God made us, he owns us.

You are owned by God. I am owned by God. We all belong to God because he made us. We are told about this in Genesis chapter 2. [Read Genesis 2:4–7]. Just like my plasticine man. God made Adam and gave him life. But there is more. God made a wonderful garden for Adam to live in. It was filled with all kinds of lovely plants and trees and rivers and streams. This garden was full of life and goodness. [Read Genesis 2:15–16] What a great place. It would have been great to live there. Imagine all the trees you could climb and all the juicy tasty fruit you could eat. It would be great to live in this luscious garden and work hard for God caring for all the good things God had made. God owned Adam and let him enjoy everything in the

garden, apart from just one tree. Because God made Adam, he owned him. God wanted what was best for Adam. God looked after him and protected him and gave him everything he needed. God gave Adam good things for him to enjoy. God was very good to Adam.

God wanted Adam to know what was good for him and what was not. So God gave Adam one command, just one, not two, not three, just one. [Read Genesis 2:17]. God told Adam that he could eat from all the tasty luscious trees in the garden apart from this one tree. God made Adam and God knew that this one tree was not good for Adam to eat. God knew that this tree would be really bad for Adam to eat, that Adam would die if he ate it. That's why God told Adam about the tree, because he wanted good things for Adam. God made Adam, so he owned him and knew what was best for him.

Have you ever thought that you belong to God? He made you. He owns you. He gave you life and breath and everything you have. Without God, none of you would be alive. Because God made you he loves you, he cares for you, and he gives you what you need. As the one who made you God knows exactly what is best for you.

God is the Creator—because he made us, he owns us. What a good God he is. Let's praise him for his power and creativity and love.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

(Each week, after hearing the Bible story retold, this age group thinks about what they've just heard. The idea is to cement the teaching in, to think through application, and to pray together. Here's an example of the kinds of questions that could be asked:)

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- Here's a list of some people who have made something. Can you tell me who owns what's been made:
  - A carpenter has made a chair
  - A painter has painted a picture
  - A baker has baked some bread
  - A girl has built a den
- Find some paper and colouring pencils. Draw what God has made.
- If you haven't already, draw yourself into the picture too.
- Who owns all these things?
- Why can God say he owns everything including us?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray in response to the story:

- A We praise you for making all things.
- C We are sorry when we forget that you own us.
- T Thank you that you have made us and given us life.
- S Please help us to see more and more how amazing you are.

## **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

(Each week, after hearing the Bible story retold, this age group looks at part of the Bible together. The idea is to get the children familiar with looking at Bible passages and thinking about applications. Here's an example of the kinds of questions that could be asked:)

- Can you think of anything that you have made which you now own?
- Find some paper and colouring pencils and divide the paper into six boxes. Find Genesis chapter 1 in your Bible. Looking at each day draw what God makes.
- Pick a random day. Imagine: if God hadn't made those things, what would the world look like now.
- God made everything we see including us. Because he made it he owns it.
  - How do you feel knowing God owns you?
  - Knowing God owns us, how should we treat him?
  - What would the rest of your day look like if you lived in acknowledgement of this truth?

## **ACTIVITY: GAME**

(Activities are another way to think over the teaching and application. They are designed to be light and fun, yet still further engage the children with what has been taught.)

Hide and seek:

1. Print pictures or find objects of creation.
2. Hide them.
3. The child's/children's task is to gather all the pieces of creation together.
4. They are only allowed to carry one piece at a time and they must answer a recap question each time they go out hunting.
5. For a further challenge there could be a time limit.

Example recap questions:

- Who made the trees?
- Who made the clouds?
- Who made people?
- Who made us?
- Who were the first people called?
- Why does God own the ...?
- Why does God own us?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

Creation song—Emu Music

## **ACTIVITY: CRAFT**

Plasticine person

You will need:

- Plasticine (modelling clay/playdough) home-made or bought. Recipe's can be found online:
- Two cocktail sticks
- Two small pieces of paper and a pen

How to make:

1. Grab some plasticine/following a recipe, make some.
2. Mould the plasticine into a person. Why not mould it into you?
3. Create two flags by attaching two small pieces of paper to two cocktail sticks.
4. Write on one of the flags 'God made me'.
5. Write on the other flag 'God owns me'.
6. Poke the flags into the hands of the plasticine figure as if they were holding them.

## Week 2

### Pre-school age: Genesis 2

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

- God made us. Praise God

#### **ACTION RHYME**

\* To the tune of 'My God is so big'

My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,  
There's nothing that he cannot do  
The mountains are his, the valleys are his,  
And he made me and you too.  
My God is so big, so strong and so mighty,  
There's nothing my God cannot do!

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' Psalm 139:14a

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

Find some pictures or look out the window at what God has made. Get the child/children to point at things God has made. As they point get them to say, "God made... (ie the trees), wow, he is amazing!" After a few goes get them to do the exercise with themselves. Repeat.

## **STORY: GOD—HE MADE US (AND EVERYTHING ELSE)**

[Note—it is important that when we teach that ‘God made us’ the emphasis needs to be on God not on us. We want to show that God is great and powerful and so on and that this God made us. We need to talk in a way that shows the children that everything doesn’t revolve around them, but around God.]

This term we are going to be hearing some very, very good news. This good news starts with God. God is big and strong and mighty, there’s nothing that he cannot do. God made everything in the whole world: mountains, valleys, stars, trees, birds, and flowers. God made everything including me and you. We’re going to hear from the Bible the story of when God made the first ever people.

In the Bible God tells us that when he made the world and everything in it, he also made a special garden. This was a very special garden. It was better than any garden you have ever seen. God filled the special garden with lovely trees. There were rivers running through the special garden. Everything was full of life. Everything looked very pretty. The garden showed how good and how kind God is. This was the best place ever—and it was made by God.

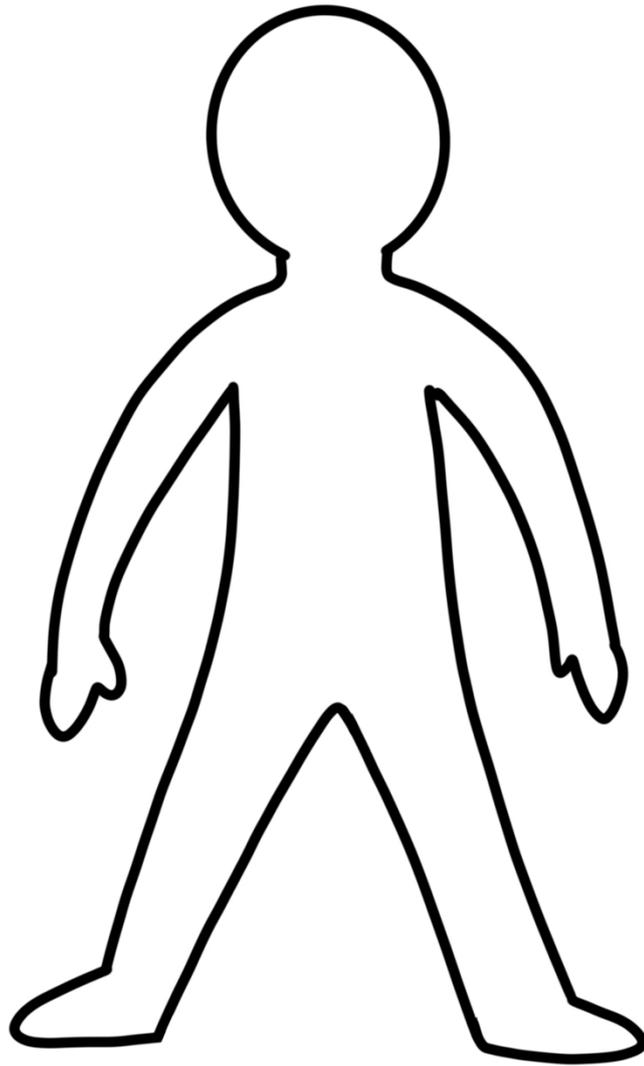
The first man in the world was called Adam. God made Adam and he put him into the special garden. God told Adam to work in the garden to look after it. What a great job Adam had! He could stay in the garden all day and see all the lovely trees and plants and rivers and animals. Adam could eat fruit from the trees and have a wonderful time. God did say that of all the many trees in the garden there was just one tree that Adam was not to eat from. God was so kind to Adam and so generous with what he gave Adam.

God did not leave Adam all alone in the garden. He also made Eve, the first woman, to help Adam work in the garden. Everything was wonderful and made exactly as God wanted. Adam and Eve were both made by God.

Every person is made by God. The same big and strong and mighty God who made Adam and Eve made you and me. The same kind and generous and wonderful God who gave Adam and Eve the special garden made us too. God made [point at a child and say their name—repeat a few times]. God made all of us.

We should tell God how great he is! We should praise him. Let’s do that now. [End by praising God for how great he is to have made everything]

God made \_\_\_\_\_



## School age: Joshua 7 (and Psalm 11:7)

### **BECAUSE GOD IS RIGHTEOUS, HE CANNOT IGNORE WRONGDOING**

To start with we are going to do some thinking. Think about the most important thing you have. What do you like most of all? What is most precious to you? Have a think. It could be a gadget like this [show picture] It could be a pet [show picture] It could be a friend [show picture]. Now picture it in your head. Can you see it? Now imagine that someone takes it from you. Imagine they don't just take it; they destroy it, right in front of your eyes, on purpose. What would you think if all this happened right in front of a teacher at school or policeman and they just ignored it? What if your teacher or the policeman just said, 'Oh well, never mind'? That would be unfair. It would be very unfair. It would be wrong.

We want things to be fair. If someone cheats in a game it is unfair. If someone steals something, that is unfair. We want unfairness to be made fair. Unfairness is not good. When something is unfair we want justice. We want someone to get what they deserve for doing wrong. Like when a robber is caught and put in prison, that's fair. He did wrong, he should be punished. If the person who destroyed your most precious thing got away with it, that would be unfair, it would be wrong. Today we are going to think about God, we are going to think about how good he is, how he doesn't like things that are unfair.

Listen to this verse from the Bible. It tells us about God. The verse comes from a book in the Bible called the Psalms. [Read Psalm 11:7a]. Listen again, it's only short. [Read it again]. Here it is on a sign in big letters [show visual]. It says that the LORD is righteous. It sounds familiar but maybe it's a new word to you: 'righteous'. The LORD is righteous. What does that mean?

Righteous means that:

God always does the right thing,

God never does the wrong thing,

So, God loves all that is right; he hates all that is wrong

Here's an example to show you what we mean. Telling the truth is always the right thing to do, so let's think about how that works with God. God always does the right thing, so God always tells the truth and God never lies. God is like this because he loves truthfulness. Telling the truth is always the right thing to do, so God will always tell the truth. So God is righteous. Here's another example. Being fair is always the right thing to do, so let's think about how that works with God. God always has been fair and he always will be fair. God never has been unfair and he never will be unfair. God loves fairness and hates unfairness.

I want to tell you about a man from the Bible called Achan. Achan learnt the hard way that the LORD is righteous and he loves fairness. This story takes place just as the Israelites, God's people, are taking over the Promised Land. We hear about it all in the book of Joshua. In the battle of Jericho lots of treasure was won and all this treasure belonged to God. Everyone was told that if they took any of God's treasure, they would bring trouble on God's people and would be destroyed. But Achan didn't care; he wanted some treasure for himself. Secretly he took for himself a beautiful cloak, lots of silver, and a bar of gold. No one saw him do it. No one knew he had stolen the treasure. But God saw. God knew.

Now, God is righteous. He always does the right thing, so God loves fairness. God always has been and always will be completely fair. What Achan did was wrong, what Achan had done deserved to be punished. Could God just ignore what Achan had done? Could God just pretend it didn't happen and let Achan get away with his wrongdoing? No. If God let Achan get away with it then God would be unfair. And God cannot be unfair. Remember, God cannot be unfair because like the Psalm told us; God is righteous, he always does what is right.

Because God is righteous he cannot ignore wrongdoing. So God did not ignore what Achan had done. After Achan had stolen God's treasure the Israelite army went into another battle at a place called Ai [pronounced 'a-i']. It should have been an easy battle; Ai was only small. But listen to what happened. [Read Joshua 7:3–5] So what happened? [Take responses from children]. This time the Israelites lost. It was the first battle they had lost. Everyone was confused. How could they lose if God was helping them? God told them the reason why they lost. Someone had done wrong. [Read 7:11] Someone had stolen God's treasure. Everyone wanted to know who it was. Who had stolen the treasure? God showed the Israelites who it was. It was Achan. Achan then admitted it was him who had done wrong. He had stolen the treasure; no one else. It was just him. Because God is righteous he could not ignore what Achan had done. Achan was punished for his wrongdoing. This true story about Achan shows us that God is righteous.

Last week and this week we have heard two very important things about God: 1. God is Creator, and 2. God is righteous. We can put these together and say God is the righteous Creator. Because God made us, he owns us, we belong to him. Because God is righteous he cannot ignore wrongdoing. It is so good that God is like this. When something is wrong or unfair we do not like it and neither does God. When someone kills someone else that is wrong. When a thief breaks into a house and steals, that is wrong. When someone is nasty and calls people names, that is wrong. We don't like these things, and neither does God. God is righteous and so he cannot ignore wrongdoing. God will make things right and fair. God won't always make things right and fair here and now, but we know God is righteous so he will make things right and fair in the end. It is so good that God is like this.

Let's praise God that he is righteous.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking:

- What does it mean that God is righteous?
  - Clue: what does he always do? What does he never do?
  - What does he love? What does he hate?
- How did the story with Achan show us that God is righteous?
- Imagine if God wasn't righteous. Why would it be a bad thing?
- How can God being righteous comfort us when we see lots of evil in the world?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray in response to the story:

- A We praise you because you are righteous—you always act in the right way
- C We are sorry that we are so unlike you—we often act the wrong way
- T Thank you that you sent Jesus to die for sinful people like us
- S Please help us praise you more and more as we realise how righteous you are

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

- Read Psalm 11:7
  - How is the LORD described? What does that mean? (Use the story you heard to help you)
  - What does he love? What does that mean? Can you think of some examples?
- Think: from the story earlier, how did God show that he is righteous?
  - Why is it a good thing that God is righteous?

### **ACTIVITY: MEMORY VERSE**

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

1. Find the memory verse
  - a. For older children, get them to help each other find the verse in their bibles.
  - b. For the younger children, hide a box in the room (the 'memory verse box') that is labelled 'memory verse', and get the children to find it. Inside this box have the memory verse printed out in easy to read size and font along with any other materials you will need for this activity.)
2. Read the memory verse.
  - a. Read the memory verse once out loud yourself. (This helps the children become familiar with the verse before they have to read it, and helps them to know how the words of the verse are pronounced.)
  - b. Read it out loud all together.
  - c. Read it around in a circle with one person taking one word at a time.
3. Discussion
  - a. (What does it say?) If we were to put some actions to this verse, what actions would you choose? [Take answers and ask the 'what does it mean?' follow up question.]
  - b. (What does it mean?) Why would you choose that action?
  - c. (What does it mean to me?) If we are honest with ourselves, how do we feel about the gospel?
4. Game
  - a. Print out the whole memory verse on sheets of paper, with one word per sheet.
  - b. Shuffle the pieces of paper so that they are out of order.
  - c. Get the children to order the sheets of paper to match the verse. (Allow them to use their Bibles.)
  - d. Reshuffle the paper and get the children to re-order the verse but this time without their Bibles.

## SONG OF THE WEEK

Our God is a great big God—Vineyard Music <https://youtu.be/eaXPXWBcE3I>

## ACTIVITY: DRAMA

Act out the story from Joshua 7.

Example idea: you could have one of the kids hide ‘treasure’ (a toy) under a blanket. Send the Israelites to battle confident that they will win! Have the Israelites defeated, and come back confused and questioning why they lost against such a small army? You could have one child read out the reason God gives in 7:11.

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?			
Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?			
What characters will we need to play?			
Who is going to play each character?			
What props might we want to use?			
What shall be the title of our play?			

Now that you've prepared, off you go.

## Week 3

### Pre-school age: Genesis 3

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

- We sin against God

#### **ACTION RHYME**

\* To the tune of... 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea'

The Bible says our hearts are bad  
We all do things that make God sad  
From our heart comes all our sin  
All of sin comes from within

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

'Against you, you only, have I sinned.' Psalm 51:4a

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

'Opposites'

The game is like 'Simon says', but instead of doing exactly what the leader says you do the opposite!

Either a leader or child stands at the front of the room and says an action to the rest of the family, such as:

- Stand up tall/ crouch down small
- Shout loudly/ whisper quietly
- Make a happy face/ make a sad face

When the leader says and does an action, everyone else has to do the opposite action. If you do the action the leader has said, instead of the opposite, you're out. Keep going until everyone is out, and then swap over the leader so the rest of the family can have a go.

## **STORY: US—WE SIN AGAINST GOD**

This term we are going to be hearing some very, very good news. This good news starts with God. God is big and strong and mighty, there's nothing that he cannot do. God made everything in the whole world: mountains, valleys, stars, trees, birds, and flowers. God made everything. God made me and God made you.

Do you remember the special garden God made? It was a very special garden. It was better than any garden you have ever seen. God filled the special garden with lovely trees. There were rivers running through the special garden. Everything was full of life. Everything looked very pretty. The garden showed how good and how kind God is. This was the best place ever—and it was made by God.

But there was a problem. Adam and Eve wanted more. They wanted more than God had given them. They wanted to be like God. They wanted to be in charge instead of God. They wanted to be able to do whatever they wanted. They wanted things their own way not God's way. So they did something very naughty. This is what happened.

Adam and Eve were in the garden God made. God said they could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except one. There was just one tree they couldn't eat the fruit from. But Adam and Eve disobeyed what God had said.

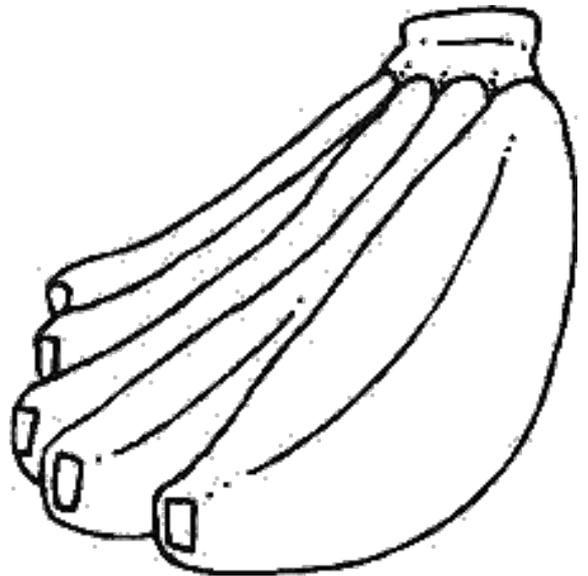
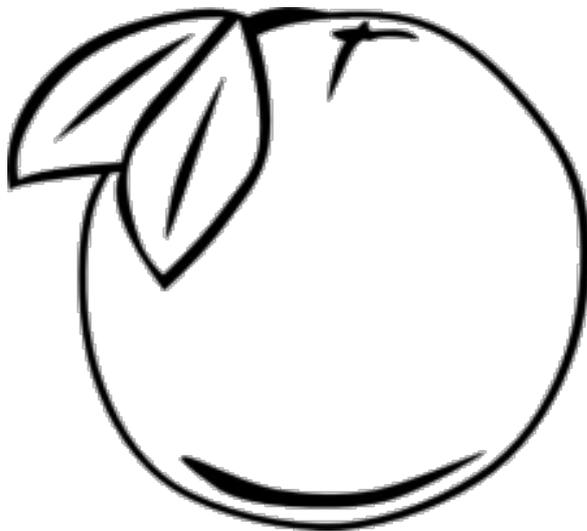
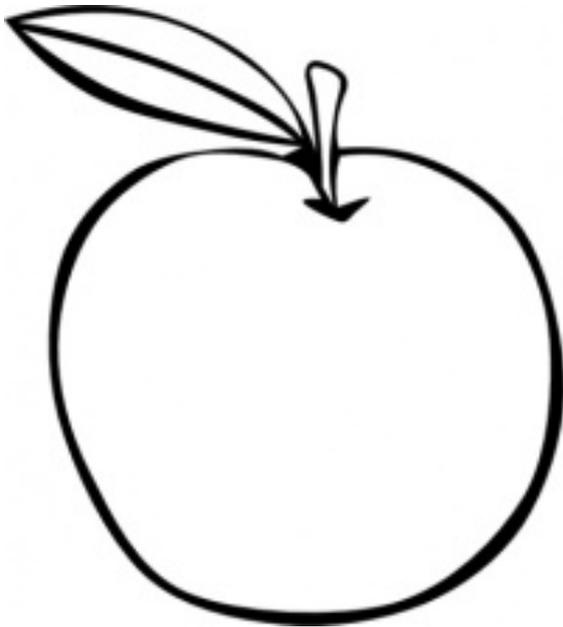
A snake came along in the garden. Out of all the animals God made, the snake was the sneakiest. Now God had said, "If you eat fruit from this one tree you will die." But the snake spoke to the woman Eve. The snake said, "If you eat from this one tree you will not die." Who was telling the truth, God or the snake? Eve had a think. She looked at the tree and saw the fruit was good fruit and she really wanted it, so she took some and ate it. Adam ate some too.

This is sin. Adam and Eve wanted to eat the fruit more than they wanted to obey God. They wanted the fruit so much that they disobeyed God. Adam and Eve didn't want God to be in charge of the garden; they wanted to be in charge instead of God. Adam and Eve sinned against God.

Every person is like Adam and Eve. All of us sin. We all want to be in charge instead of God. We all want to be the most important person in the world. And this is wrong. This is naughty. This is sin against God. We all need to say sorry to God for our sin. We all need God to forgive us our sin. I need to say sorry to God and you do too. Everyone should say sorry to God for our sin because everyone has sinned against God. [End by saying sorry to God for our sin.]

**CRAFT**

Print out and colour in the following pictures.



## School age: Genesis 3

### **WE ARE REBELS AGAINST GOD**

Remember this? [Show plasticine man from story 1] It's the plasticine man I made. He was made by me. Because I made him, I own him. He belongs to me. We imagined that I was able to make him come alive. Everything this little man had would be because of me. We could have a lot of fun together. We could go on walks together, play together, explore together.

Put up your hand if you remember making your own plasticine figures. You made the figures. They were yours, they belonged to you. Some of you gave them a name. Now imagine that you were able to breathe life into your figures, imagine you made them come alive. That would be exciting wouldn't it? But, what if one day your little figure said to you, "I don't belong to you anymore," would that be true? [Get answers from children] No, it wouldn't be true. What if he said, "From now on I want to do everything my way and for me," would you mind that at all? How would you feel? [Get answers from children]

That is like what happened right at the beginning of the Bible with God and Adam and Eve. All this term we're learning about the gospel—the good news about Jesus. We began with God. Who is God? God is the righteous Creator and we should praise him for what he is like. Remember we've heard that God is Creator: Because he made us, he owns us. And God is righteous: because he is righteous, he cannot ignore wrongdoing.

We've been hearing good news about God and soon we will hear good news about Jesus. But for the next two weeks we are going to hear some bad news; some bad news about us. Hearing the bad news will help us get ready to hear the really good news. Today's story is about 'us'. What are we like? According to God, we are rebels.

Remember the garden of Eden. It was the most amazing and wonderful place that God made. And God put Adam and Eve inside the garden. God was so generous that he filled the garden with life—there were rivers and all kinds of trees and plants for them to enjoy. It was a wonderful place. God gave Adam and Eve just one rule a kind rule, to protect them. Remember what God said to Adam: [Read Genesis 2:16–17].

Today we are going to hear what happened next in the wonderful garden of Eden. And it was bad. This is bad news about what Adam and Eve did. It's also bad news for us, because God tells us in the Bible that all of us are like Adam and Eve.

Like Adam and Eve, we've all rebelled against God.

We hear about this in the Bible in Genesis chapter 3. Listen to what it says. [Read 3:1–6]. Adam and Eve wanted to be in charge. They wanted to do what they liked even though this meant disobeying God. Just like Adam and Eve we want to be in charge of what we do instead of having God in charge of us. This is rebellion. Rebellion is not just about our actions (disobeying what God says); it is about our attitude, what we're like inside. Rebelling against God is what the Bible calls sin. But there's more bad news to hear...

Like Adam and Eve, we can't make any excuses for our rebellion.

Listen to what happens next in Genesis. [Read 3:7–13]. Instead of owning up to God and admitting he had done wrong; Adam blamed Eve. Eve did not own up to God for what she had done wrong either; she blamed the snake. We don't like to own up to God for what we have done wrong either. We like to blame others for what we do wrong too—maybe you have blamed your brother or sister before for something you

did. But we can't make excuses to God because he knows we have all rebelled against him. But there's even more bad news:

Like Adam and Eve, we're facing God's judgement.

Listen to what happens next. [Read 3:14–19]. Remember God gave only one rule in the garden of Eden. If they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil then they will certainly die. And Adam and Eve did just what God said not to. God is righteous, he loves good and he cannot ignore wrongdoing. God is rightly angry at Adam and Eve's wrongdoing. So, God curses the snake, then Eve, then Adam. They are punished for their wrongdoing, their rebellion against God and they will die, just as God said.

This is the bad news. We are all rebels against God. We all want to do things our way, not God's way. God is rightly angry with us and will punish us for our rebellion, everyone dies. This really is bad news for all of us. But hearing this bad news will help us see how great the good news of Jesus is. And we get a little picture of the good news at the end of this story:

The good news: like Adam and Eve, God is still kind to rebels like us.

[Read 3:21]. God made Adam and Eve clothes to wear made out of animal skin. They didn't deserve it, but God was kind to Adam and Eve, even though they were rebels. To make clothes out of animal skin an animal must have died, blood must have been shed, there was a sacrifice. This is one of the first hints in the Bible that rebellion against God can be fixed. It can be fixed by something or someone dying for sinners. And this makes us think about Jesus. God sent Jesus to die on the cross so that rebels like us could be forgiven.

When we hear this bad news, we should agree with what God says—he always speaks the truth. We are all rebels against God. Then we should say sorry to God. We can confess to him that we know that we are like Adam and Eve and deserve to be punished by God for our rebellion against him. But we can also thank God that he sent Jesus to fix our rebellion problem. The good news about Jesus really is good news. When we hear the bad news it shows us why the good news is such good news. God sent Jesus to fix our rebellion problem. This is the good news we will hear about later this term.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- What did Adam and Eve do wrong in the story?
- How did God respond to what they did?
- Why was it so wrong for Adam and Eve to eat the fruit in the garden?
- How are we like Adam and Eve in the story?
- When have we lived like we were in charge of our lives this week, not God? (eg fought with our siblings, said unkind things to our parents, thought mean things about our family)
- What should we say when we are talking to God about our sin? Why?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you for your goodness and your kindness.
- C We are sorry that often we want to be in charge of our lives instead of you.
- T Thank you for sending Jesus to die on the cross to fix our sin problem.
- S Please help us to live with you in charge.

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

Re-read Genesis chapter 3 verses 1–6

- What did the serpent say to tempt Eve to eat the fruit? (Look at v1 and v4–5)
- What did Eve and Adam do in response?
  - What do their responses show us about how they think of God?
- Why was it so wrong for Adam and Eve to eat the fruit in the garden?

Think:

- We are just like Adam and Eve. We want to be like God and to be in charge of our own lives.
  - Think of an example of a time when you have tried to live like you were in charge instead God (eg when you have disobeyed your parents at home, when you haven't loved your siblings)
- What can we say to God in response to today's passage? How can we talk to him about our sin?

### **ACTIVITY: GAME**

'Opposites'

The game is like 'Simon says', but instead of doing exactly what the leader says you do the opposite.

Either a parent or child stands at the front of the room and says an action to the rest of the family, eg

- Stand up tall/ crouch down small
- Shout loudly/ whisper quietly
- Make a happy face/ make a sad face

When the leader says and does an action, everyone else has to do the opposite action. If you do the action the leader has said, instead of the opposite, you're out. Keep going until everyone is out, and then swap over the leader so the rest of the family can have a go.

Example recap questions:

1. What one good rule did God give Adam and Eve?
2. Who tempted Eve?
3. Who did Adam blame after he ate the fruit?
4. How did God punish Eve?
5. How did God punish Adam?
6. What kind thing did God do for Adam and Eve after they had sinned?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

'Jesus is the mighty, mighty king'—Colin Buchanan

This song helps us the children to grasp that we are not in charge of our lives, Jesus is!

Swap your children's names into the song and make up some actions to help the children remember the words.

## **ACTIVITY: CRAFT**

Paper chain 'sin snake'

You will need:

- Coloured paper
- Coloured pencils or pens
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Glue

### **How to make:**

1. Cut strips of different coloured paper (about 2cm thick and at least six strips—though you can have many more!
2. Write(in big letters) a word of the big idea of the story on each of the first six strips of paper (Big idea: We are all rebels against God)
3. Draw a head shape with some eyes and a tongue and cut it out
4. Take the first paper strip and roll into a circle. Staple the ends together
5. Take the next strip of paper and loop it through the first one before stapling its ends.
6. Keep going until you finish the six words of the big idea and then for as long as you want your snake to be
7. Glue the snakes head onto the first link of the chain



## Week 4

### Pre-school age: Genesis 3

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

- We sin against God. Sorry God

#### **ACTION RHYME**

\* To the tune of... 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea'

The Bible says our hearts are bad  
We all do things that make God sad  
From our heart comes all our sin  
All of sin comes from within

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

'Against you, you only, have I sinned.' Psalm 51:4a

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

1. Practice the concept together until all the children are confident saying it from memory
2. Set up an area where the children can run from one side to the other. (This could be called 'the garden of Eden')
3. Leaders are to stand to the side with some soft balls. (These could be called 'fruit')
4. The children start by standing on one side of the area.
5. With appropriate help they must recite the concept.
6. Once they have done this their aim is to make it to the other side without being touched by a soft ball.
7. Leaders are to throw the balls across and in the way of the children.
8. If a child is hit by a ball they must answer a review question and are allowed back into the game.

Example story review questions:

- Did Adam and Eve sin against God?
- Do we sin against God?
- How did Adam and Eve disobey God?
- Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

## **STORY: US—WE SIN AGAINST GOD**

This term we are going to be hearing some very, very good news. This good news starts with God. God is big and strong and mighty, there's nothing that he cannot do. God made everything in the whole world: mountains, valleys, stars, trees, birds, and flowers. God made everything. God made me and God made you.

Do you remember the special garden God made? It was a very special garden. It was better than any garden you have ever seen. God filled the special garden with lovely trees. There were rivers running through the special garden. Everything was full of life. Everything looked very pretty. The garden showed how good and how kind God is. This was the best place ever—and it was made by God.

But there was a problem. Adam and Eve wanted more. They wanted more than God had given them. They wanted to be like God. They wanted to be in charge instead of God. They wanted to be able to do whatever they wanted. They wanted things their own way not God's way. So they did something very naughty. This is what happened.

Adam and Eve were in the Garden God made. God said they could eat the fruit from any tree in the garden except one. There was just one tree they couldn't eat the fruit from. But Adam and Eve disobeyed what God had said.

A snake came along in the garden. Out of all the animals God made, the snake was the sneakiest. Now God had said, "If you eat fruit from this one tree you will die." But the snake spoke to the woman Eve. The snake said, "If you eat from this one tree you will not die." Who was telling the truth, God or the snake? Eve had a think. She looked at the tree and saw the fruit was good fruit and she really wanted it, so she took some and ate it. Adam ate some too.

This is sin. Adam and Eve wanted to eat the fruit more than they wanted to obey God. They wanted the fruit so much that they disobeyed God. Adam and Eve didn't want God to be in charge of the garden; they wanted to be in charge instead of God. Adam and Eve sinned against God.

Every person is like Adam and Eve. All of us sin. We all want to be in charge instead of God. We all want to be the most important person in the world. And this is wrong. This is naughty. This is sin against God. We all need to say sorry to God for our sin. We all need God to forgive us our sin. I need to say sorry to God and you do too. Everyone should say sorry to God for our sin because everyone has sinned against God. [End by saying sorry to God for our sin.]

## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

Paper chain 'sin snake'

You will need:

- Coloured paper
- Coloured pencils or pens
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Glue

**How to make:**

1. Cut strips of different coloured paper (about 2cm thick and at least six strips—though you can have many more!
2. Draw a head shape with some eyes and a tongue and cut it out
3. Take the first paper strip and roll into a circle. Staple the ends together
4. Take the next strip of paper and loop it through the first one before stapling its ends.
5. Keep going for as long as you want your snake to be.
6. Glue the snakes head onto the first link of the chain.
7. Re-tell the story you heard today using the snake.



## School age: Romans 3:9–20

### **WE ARE ALL UNRIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD**

So far this term we have heard about God and what he is like—God is the righteous Creator. Today we will hear about ‘us’—and unfortunately today is a day for bad news. Last week we heard that God says we are all rebels against him. Now we have more bad news. Listen to what it says in the Bible, [Read Romans 3:10]. God says that no one is righteous; everyone is unrighteous and that includes you and me. Remember what righteous means? ‘Righteous’ means always doing the right thing and never doing the wrong thing. God is righteous, but we are not righteous. We are unrighteous. Unrighteous means we do not always do the right thing.

I’ve got some words to show you. Always, usually, sometimes, never [have these words on separate signs]. These words will help us learn that all of us are unrighteous. Only people who always do the right thing all the time are righteous. God is the one who decides whether someone is righteous or not. We’re going to hear about some different people and see whether God will say they are righteous or unrighteous.

Norrice Never: Norrice never tells the truth. One day Norrice Never was in the playground. Someone asked him where he went on his summer holiday. Now Norrice didn’t go on a holiday but he didn’t want to say that, so he made something up. “I went to America,” he said. “I went on an airplane and went to Disneyland® and went on lots of rides.” Norrice told stories like this all the time. The next day, his teacher asked him if he brought his book bag to school. Norrice had just forgotten it, but he didn’t want to say that, so he made something up. “I was going to bring it to school”, he said, “but at the last moment I put it down and our dog ran off with it. We couldn’t find it and would have been late to school if we stopped to look for it any longer. So, mum said I would have to go to school without it.” Norrice always made excuses like this that were not true.

Would God say that Norrice Never was righteous or unrighteous? [Get answers from the children] God would say Norrice is unrighteous. Not telling the truth is wrong. Norrice lied and so Norrice is not righteous like God, Norrice is unrighteous.

Sally Sometimes: Sally sometimes tells the truth. Sally enjoyed playing games with her friends. Her favourite game was tag. She was the best at playing tag because she hardly ever got caught. Or at least that’s what she said. “Didn’t I just tag you?” people would say to her. “No, you didn’t,” she would say, “You just missed my jumper as I turned away.” In fact, she had been tagged quite a lot—and it used to cause lots of arguments when she said she hadn’t been tagged. But sometimes Sally would say, “Ah, you got me this time.” This meant that people started to believe her when she said she hadn’t been tagged. Sally Sometimes was like this a lot. Most of the time she would lie, but sometimes she would tell the truth.

Would God say that Sally Sometimes was righteous or unrighteous? [Get answers from the children] God would say Sally is unrighteous. Not telling the truth is wrong. Sally only told the truth sometimes, so she is not righteous like God, Sally is unrighteous.

Eugene Usually: Eugene usually tells the truth. When someone asked him what he did on holiday, he usually told the truth. If he left his book bag at home, he would be honest when his teacher asked him about it. When he played tag with his friends he accepted when he was tagged. People at school thought Eugene was a good boy and all the grown-ups thought he was honest. And usually he was. One hot and sunny day Eugene and his family were having lunch outside in the garden. Unfortunately, Eugene wasn’t

concentrating and knocked over his drink, so it soaked his sister's dress. Nobody had seen Eugene knock over the cup. "Oh dear, what's happened here?" Eugene's dad asked. "A bit of wind came and blew the cup over," Eugene replied. As Eugene usually tells the truth everyone believed him and the mess was mopped up and his family enjoyed their lunch outside. This was the first time in ages that Eugene had not told the truth. He decided that he wouldn't tell a lie like that again.

Would God say that Eugene Usually was righteous or unrighteous? [Get answers from the children] God would say Eugene is unrighteous. Being righteous means telling the truth all the time. Eugene is unrighteous because he lied, even though it was only once.

Remember the verse from the Bible we heard at the beginning [Read Romans 3:10] The Bible says no one is righteous not even one. Even people who are really good and behave well are unrighteous. No one always does the right thing. God says that I am unrighteous and God says that you are unrighteous. God says that every person in this room is unrighteous. We might be unrighteous people who never do the right thing, like Norrice. We might be unrighteous people who sometimes do the right thing, like Sally. We might even be unrighteous people who usually do the right thing, like Eugene. But God still says we are unrighteous. No one on earth does the right thing all the time. There is no one righteous, not even one.

So, here is the problem with 'us'—we have all rebelled against the God who owns us. We are all unrighteous. Because God is righteous, he cannot ignore any of our wrongdoing or rebellion. One day we will all stand before God and he will judge us. He will say that we are all unrighteous. And it is only fair and right that wrongdoing and rebellion should be punished. The punishment for our wrongdoing and rebellion against God is death. This is the bad news we all need to hear. This bad news shows us that we all need to hear the good news about Jesus. We all need to know how we can be saved from God's judgement and the punishment of death. Hearing this bad news should make us all want to listen carefully to the good news. But that is for next week. For now, the best thing we can do is talk to God, admit to him that the bad news about us is true and say sorry for rebelling against him.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- What did the Bible passage you looked at in the story say people are like?
- Who was that talking about? Does it include us?
- How do you think God feels about people acting this way in his world?
- Can you think of some of the ways you've not lived in the way God wants us to?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you that you are rightly angry at all the sin in your world
- C We are sorry that we ignore you and sin against you
- T Thank you that you don't ignore our sin
- S Please help us to see the problem we all have, and to see how much we need you to fix it

## DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)

Re-read Romans 3:10–12

- What does this passage say people are like?
- Who is the passage talking about? Does it include us?

Think:

- How do you think God feels about people acting this way? Is it right for him to feel this way?
- So what is the big problem everyone on earth faces?
- How does this help us to see why we really need the good news that comes next?
- Have a think of some of the ways you've not lived how God wants us to. Pray to God and say sorry to him for these things.

## ACTIVITY: DRAMA

Act out Romans 3:10–12.

Example idea: pretend that God is going on a quest to find one person in the world that is righteous, who doesn't sin. Allocate one character to be God and allocate anyone else who wants to be involved as different people in the world. You could even use soft toys or Lego® figures to be the different people. Have the person playing God journey round the room/ house/ garden looking for someone who is righteous. He goes around meeting lots of people but all of them are sinners. Wherever God looks he is unable to find anyone righteous. Not even one person!

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?			
Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?			
What characters will we need to play?			
Who is going to play each character?			

What props might we want to use?	
What shall be the title of our play?	

Now that you've prepared, off you go.

### SONG OF THE WEEK

'Isaiah 53:6'—Colin Buchanan

This song teaches us a verse from Isaiah, another part of the Bible. It helps us to see that we all have disobeyed God, like sheep going astray. It helps us see how much we need Jesus' death in our place, which we'll hear more about in the next few weeks.

### ACTIVITY: MEMORY VERSE

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

1. Find the memory verse
  - a. For older children, get them to help each other find the verse in their Bibles.
  - b. For the younger children, hide a box in the room (the 'memory verse box') that is labelled 'memory verse', and get the children to find it. (Inside this box have the memory verse printed out in easy to read size and font along with any other materials you will need for this activity.)
2. Read the memory verse.
  - a. Read the memory verse out loud all together.
3. Discussion
  - a. (What does it say?) Using colouring pencils and paper try to draw something in this verse.
  - b. (What does it mean?) What do we learn about the gospel?
  - c. (What does it mean to me?) This term we've been looking at the gospel. Our memory verse tells us why this gospel is so important to us, can you spot it?
4. Game
  - a. Print out the verse in full, partially completed, and not completed.
  - b. Get the children to recite the memory verse using the full version as an aid.
  - c. Get the children to recite the memory verse using the partial version as an aid.
  - d. Get the children to recite the memory verse using the incomplete version as an aid.

## Week 5

### Pre-school age: Mark 15

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

- Jesus died for sinners like us

#### **ACTION RHYME**

\* To the tune of 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea'

King Jesus came so he could die  
To save sinners like you and I  
On the cross King Jesus died  
To save sinners like you and I

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' 1 Timothy 1:15

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

Challenge the children to pack a bag in five minutes with the heaviest objects you can find in the house. Get your child/children to try and carry the bag. (Make sure it's heavy enough!) When they struggle, offer to place the objects in your own bag and carry it for them.

## **STORY: JESUS—HE DIED FOR SINNERS LIKE US**

We are going to hear good news today! Remember what we've been learning so far this term. We began with 'Praise God—he made us'. Then we said, 'Sorry God—we sin against you.' Today we are going to say, 'Thank you God—thank you that Jesus died for sinners like us.' It is good news that Jesus died for sinners like us.

The Bible says our hearts are bad; we all do things that make God sad. From our heart comes all our sin; all our sin comes from within. We all sin against God. I sin. You sin. We all sin. God is kind and good, but he must punish sin because sin is bad. Everyone who sins deserves to be punished by God.

There is only one person who has never sinned; Jesus. Jesus does not need to be punished by God because he never sinned. Jesus never did anything wrong. In the Bible, we hear what happened to Jesus.

[Scene 1—show a picture of a cross with a background including a sun in the sky] Jesus never did anything wrong. God sent him to earth to tell us good news. Jesus told people that God made us. Jesus told people that we all sin against God. Jesus told people how they could be friends with God. But some people did not like Jesus. They were very angry. They said Jesus must die. So Jesus was put up on a cross to make him die. When Jesus was dying on the cross some people laughed at him. Next to Jesus there were two more crosses.

[Scene 2—add two more crosses to the picture] On these crosses there were two robbers who were dying. Even though they were dying one of them laughed at Jesus and made fun of him. Some people walked past Jesus dying on the cross and they didn't like the good news either. They laughed at him. [Add people around the bottom of the crosses.]

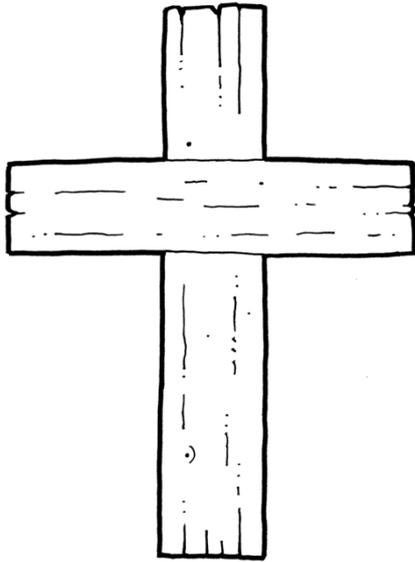
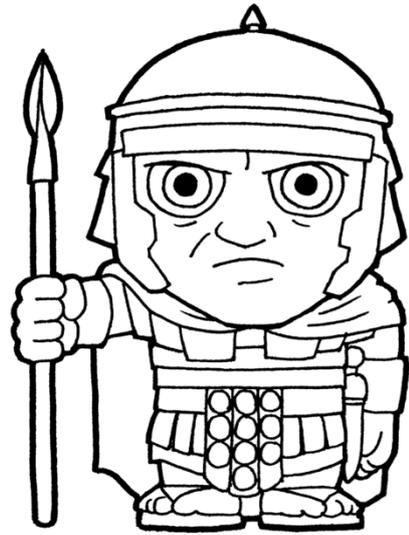
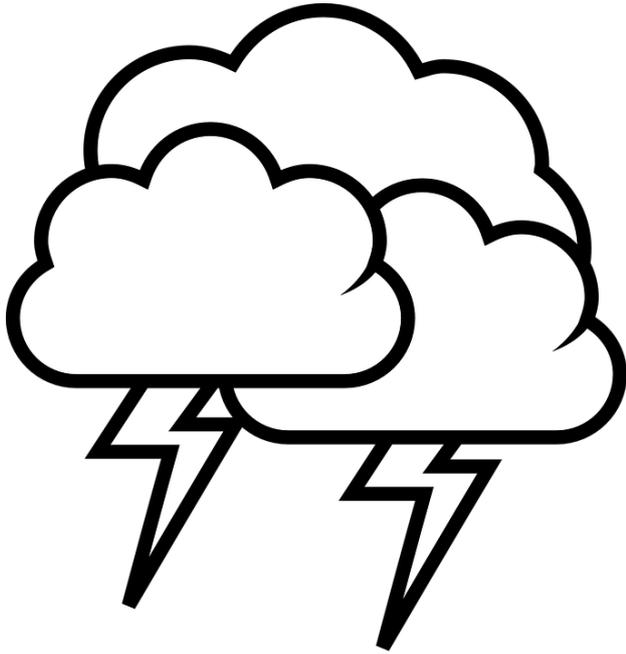
Even the leaders of the people made fun of Jesus as he died on the cross. This was very mean and nasty. Lots of people laughed at Jesus when he was dying on the cross. But then a strange thing happened. It went dark outside in the middle of the day. The sun stopped shining. It turned to night in the middle of the day [change background to a dark version of the background with no sun].

[Scene 3—add dark clouds above the cross.] Why did it get dark? The darkness showed that God was angry. God was angry at sin. God was punishing someone for sin. But what a surprise! God was punishing Jesus. God punished Jesus for the sin of all his people. Jesus did not deserve to be punished, but he died on the cross instead of sinners like us. If we say sorry to God for our sin and if we trust in Jesus, then we can be friends with God! We won't be punished for our sin, because Jesus has already taken our punishment.

This is good news! Let's thank God that Jesus died for sinners like us.

## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

Cut out and colour in. Use them as visual aids for the story in week 6.



## School age: 1 ] John 2:1b

### **JESUS LIVED A PERFECTLY RIGHTEOUS LIFE, FOR US**

So far this term we have heard about God and about us. We heard that God is our righteous creator. Last week we heard about three people: Never Norris, Sometimes Sally and Usually Eugene. Norris, he never told the truth; Sally, she sometimes told the truth and Eugene, he usually told the truth. But none of them always told the truth. Last week we learnt that no one is righteous, not even one. No matter how hard we try or how good we think we are. No one is righteous. No one does what is right all the time. Because of our unrighteousness God is angry. That was the bad news, we are unrighteous.

This week we are going to think about the good news. We are going to meet someone who is righteous. Someone that the Bible says is 'the Righteous One' [1 John 2:1]. This person always does the right thing, this person has never lied, and this person has never been mean to anyone, best of all this person has always done what God said they should do. This person is Jesus.

This week is the first part of the good news about Jesus. Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life. He is like the opposite of Adam. When Adam was in the garden of Eden he was tempted by Satan to do wrong, to eat from the tree God had told him not to. Adam listened to Satan and turned away from God. Adam did not want to do what God wanted so he disobeyed God, eating the fruit of the forbidden tree. I want to show you two parts of Jesus life that show he is perfectly righteous, how he is not like Adam and not like us.

[Show the following heading on a sign: 'Jesus in the wilderness talking with Satan'] A wilderness is a place where nothing grows very well. It's like a desert. Jesus went into the wilderness just after he was baptised. This is what Matthew says in his gospel, [read Matthew 4:1]. When Satan tempted Jesus he was trying to get Jesus to do something wrong. Satan was trying to make Jesus disobey God. Just like Satan tried to make Adam disobey God in the beginning. If Jesus did something wrong then he would be unrighteous. God would have to be rightly angry with Jesus and punish Jesus along with everyone else.

Matthew tells us what happened. Three times Satan tempted Jesus. In the wilderness Jesus got very hungry because there was no food. So Satan tempted him, [read Matthew 4:2-3] Jesus hadn't had any food for forty days and forty nights. Jesus was hungry. Satan was trying to get Jesus to think that God did not care about Jesus. Satan was trying to get Jesus to not trust God to give him what he needed. But Jesus did not disobey God. He did the right thing.

Then Satan took Jesus to the top of the temple and told him to jump off. This would be a test for God to see if he really would help Jesus. But Jesus did not do what Satan said. Jesus knew it was wrong to give God tests like this. For a third time Satan tempted Jesus. He took him to a very high place and showed him all the kingdoms in the world. Satan told Jesus that he would give Jesus all the kingdoms if he just bowed down and worshipped Satan. To have all the kingdoms in the world would be an amazing thing to have. But Jesus knew it would be wrong to bow down and worship Satan, so he didn't. Again Jesus did the right thing.

Satan managed to get Adam to do the wrong thing, but he could not manage to get Jesus to do the wrong thing. Jesus was righteous; he always did the right thing. Jesus Christ is 'the Righteous One'. God, his Father, was pleased with him. God did not have to be rightly angry with Jesus because Jesus had done nothing wrong. There was another big test for Jesus though. This did not happen in the wilderness, it happened in a garden called Gethsemane.

[Show the following heading on a sign: 'Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane talking with God'] God had given Jesus a very important, but very difficult job to do. God wanted Jesus to die on the cross. There Jesus would be mocked and humiliated, and then Jesus would face God's anger as he died. Jesus knew that is what he must do, but it was very hard for him. If Jesus was righteous, then he must do what is right, including going to die on the cross. But this was not easy for Jesus. Just before he was arrested, Jesus went to the garden of Gethsemane. It was dark and late. Jesus wanted to pray to God about what was about to happen. Jesus was very troubled.

Matthew tells us what he prayed [read Matthew 26:39a—'My Father if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me']. Jesus is talking here about dying. He is asking God his Father not to send him to die. But then Jesus says something that shows he is still 'The Righteous One'. He said to God, [read 26:39b— 'Yet not as I will, but as you will']. Jesus says he will do what God wants him to do, not what he wants. 'Yet not as I will, but as you will.' Jesus wants to obey God; he wants to do what is right. That night in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed this prayer three times. He did not disobey God. Jesus did the right thing.

Jesus is 'the Righteous One'. Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness three times, but he did not turn away from God. Jesus was tested three times in the garden of Gethsemane, but he still did not turn away from God. Jesus was righteous. He always did the right thing and he never did the wrong thing. Jesus did what God his Father wanted. Jesus went to die on the cross.

We started by remembering the bad news, that we are not like God, that we are unrighteous and God is rightly angry at us. Today we have started to hear the good news. Jesus is not like us; he is like God—he is righteous. It is good news for us that Jesus lived a righteous life. He always did what God wanted and this included going to die on the cross. If Jesus was not righteous he could not save us. We'll hear more about this next week.

For now, let's praise God for the good news that Jesus is righteous, that he has never done the wrong thing.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- Write down some of the things you've done this week (eg lessons, screen time, walks, playing with brothers or siblings, etc.) In each of these things, how much were you living for God (being righteous) or living for yourself? Choose a number between 1 and 10, with 10 being perfectly righteous.
- Did you live perfectly righteously in each of them?
- How is Jesus different from you and me? Pick one of these sentences:
  - Jesus is never righteous
  - Jesus is sometimes righteous
  - Jesus is often righteous
  - Jesus is always righteous
- Jesus always did the right thing which pleased God. When did Jesus obeyed God perfectly (can you remember from the talk)?

## **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you for Jesus, who was perfectly righteous.
- C We are sorry for all the times we are unrighteous against you.
- T Thank you that Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life and so could save us on the cross.
- S Please help us remember that we are not perfect.

## **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

Read 1 John 2:1b

- In what way was Jesus unlike any other human being?
- What does it mean that Jesus is 'the Righteous One'?

Think:

- Think of all the ways in which we haven't pleased God this week.
- How is Jesus different from you and me?
- Why is it only Jesus who can save us on the cross?
- Spend some time thanking Jesus that he can save us from our unrighteousness because he was perfectly righteous.

## **ACTIVITY: GAME**

Piggyback balloon tennis

1. Make a racquet/racquets by sticking a lollipop stick to a paper plate. Inflate a balloon as a 'tennis ball'.
2. Give your child/children a racquet and give them a piggyback.
3. Throw the balloon into the air and attempt to keep the balloon in the air for as long as possible with the racquet.
4. Ask a recap question every time the balloon falls onto the ground.
5. If there's a few of you in the house, why not play against each other?

Example recap questions:

- What does righteousness mean?
- Jesus is unlike any other human being that has ever lived. How is he different from you and me?
- What did Jesus do when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness?
- What did Jesus do in the Garden of Gethsemane?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

'So great is Jesus' love'—Emu Music

## ACTIVITY: CRAFT

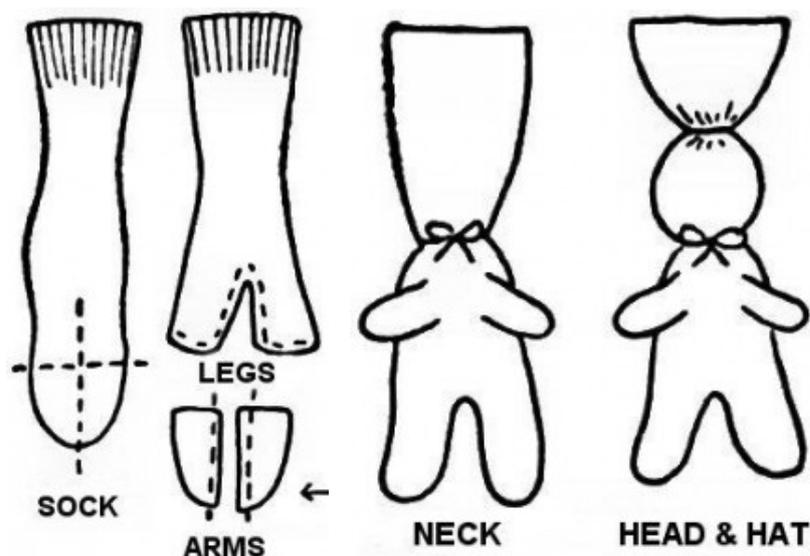
Sock people

You will need:

- Two old socks
- Scissors
- Either needle and thread, or tape
- Small pieces of string
- Stuffing (scrap paper, cotton wool etc)
- Name label sticker

How to make:

1. Cut the socks as shown in the diagram below to create limbs.
2. Sew/stick the arms onto the torso of the doll. Seal the legs.
3. Stuff the doll's torso with your stuffing of choice.
4. Create a neck by tying a knot with a piece of string to seal the torso. Stuff the head and tie off with another piece of string. (It doesn't need to be perfect! It just needs to look recognisably humanoid.)
5. On one sock, write 'righteous' on a label sticker and stick it on. On the other, write 'unrighteous' and stick it on.
6. Use the sock people to tell the story: Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life to save unrighteous sinners like us. Though he was a man like us, he did not sin, unlike Adam and ourselves.
7. Tip: Why not make the sock people ahead of time and use them as a visual aid during the Bible story?



## Week 6

### Pre-school age: Mark 15

#### **TEACHING CONCEPT**

- Jesus died for sinners like us. Thank you God

#### **ACTION RHYME**

\* To the tune of 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea'

King Jesus came so he could die  
To save sinners like you and I  
On the cross King Jesus died  
To save sinners like you and I

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' 1 Timothy 1:15

#### **GROUP TIME: GAME**

1. Practice the concept together until all the children are confident saying it from memory
2. Set up some skittles on one side of the room.
3. Each child takes it in turn to try to knock down as many skittles as they can with a ball.
4. If they knock down any amount of skittles they can answer a story review question.

Example story review questions:

- Did Adam and Eve sin against God?
- Do we sin against God?
- How did Adam and Eve disobey God?
- Why did Adam and Eve disobey God?

## **STORY: JESUS—HE DIED FOR SINNERS LIKE US. THANK YOU GOD**

We are going to hear good news today! Remember what we've been learning so far this term. We began with 'Praise God—he made us'. Then we said, 'Sorry God—we sin against you.' Today we are going to say, 'Thank you God—thank you that Jesus died for sinners like us.' It is good news that Jesus died for sinners like us.

The Bible says our hearts are bad; we all do things that make God sad. From our heart comes all our sin; all our sin comes from within. We all sin against God. I sin. You sin. We all sin. God is kind and good, but he must punish sin because sin is bad. Everyone who sins deserves to be punished by God.

There is only one person who has never sinned; Jesus. Jesus does not need to be punished by God because he never sinned. Jesus never did anything wrong. In the Bible, we hear what happened to Jesus.

[Scene 1—show a picture of a cross with a background including a sun in the sky] Jesus never did anything wrong. God sent him to earth to tell us good news. Jesus told people that God made us. Jesus told people that we all sin against God. Jesus told people how they could be friends with God. But some people did not like Jesus. They were very angry. They said Jesus must die. So Jesus was put up on a cross to make him die. When Jesus was dying on the cross some people laughed at him. Next to Jesus there were two more crosses.

[Scene 2—add two more crosses to the picture] On these crosses there were two robbers who were dying. Even though they were dying one of them laughed at Jesus and made fun of him. Some people walked past Jesus dying on the cross and they didn't like the good news either. They laughed at him. [Add people around the bottom of the crosses.]

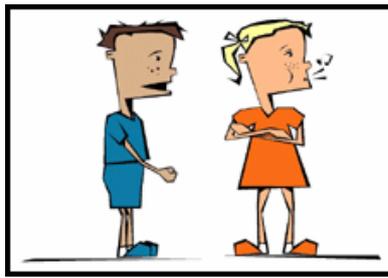
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[Scene 3—add dark clouds above the cross.] Why did it get dark? The darkness showed that God was angry. God was angry at sin. God was punishing someone for sin. But what a surprise! God was punishing Jesus. God punished Jesus for the sin of all his people. Jesus did not deserve to be punished, but he died on the cross instead of sinners like us. If we say sorry to God for our sin and if we trust in Jesus, then we can be friends with God! We won't be punished for our sin, because Jesus has already taken our punishment.

This is good news! Let's thank God that Jesus died for sinners like us.

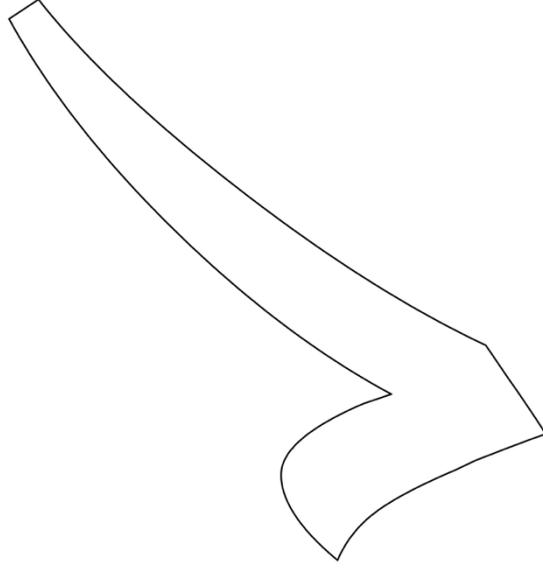
## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

1. Print out the current and following two pages.
2. Cut out the pictures of children sinning.
3. Stick them under 'We all sin against God' and 'For sinners like us'.
4. Colour in the tick and the cross



**We all sin against God**

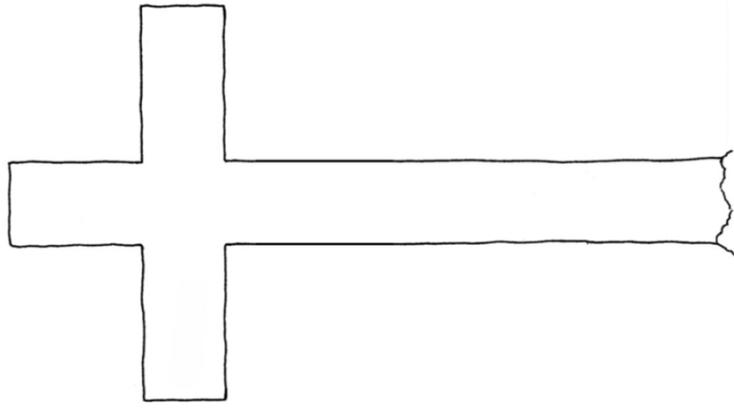
**Jesus never sinned against God**



Stick on pictures of children

**BUT...**

**Jesus died**



**For sinners like us**

Draw a picture of you

**Mark 15**

## School age: Luke 23

### JESUS DIED A SINNER'S DEATH, FOR US

Who knows what this is [show picture of a criminal]? What do you think this man might have done? What do you think he deserves? In today's story we meet two criminals who had done things so bad they were being killed on a cross for their punishment. But first we need to remember what we have been learning about the gospel this term. The gospel is the good news about Jesus. A few weeks ago we heard about 'us', that was the bad news. We are unrighteous, sometimes we don't do the right thing and this makes God very angry. Last week we thought about 'Jesus', we thought about what he was like. We heard that Jesus was 'the Righteous One'. Jesus always did the right thing; he always did what God, his Father, wanted. Always doing what his Father wanted; meant Jesus came to die on a cross. Today we are going to think about why Jesus died on a cross and why that is such good news for you and me.

Jesus died on a cross. Being killed on a cross was a punishment given to the worst criminals. When Jesus died on a cross, two criminals were dying on crosses next to him. These must have been pretty bad criminals if they were crucified. Here's a picture of the three crosses. [Show visual] The middle one is Jesus. We can label this one 'righteous'. [Add label to visual] The two other crosses are for the criminals. We can label them both unrighteous. [Add labels to visuals] God is rightly angry at everyone who is unrighteous. Now let's hear what happened straight from the Bible. [Read Luke 23:39–43]

Did you hear what criminal number one did? He hurled insults at Jesus. Even when this thief was dying he still manages to make fun of Jesus, 'Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!' This thief is unrighteous and he will die an enemy of God. Then God will punish his unrighteousness.

But did you hear what the other criminal said? 'Don't you fear God,' he said, 'since we are under the same sentence? We are punished justly.' This man knows he deserves to be punished. He knows he is wrong; he knows he is guilty. He knows he is unrighteous. He admits it. But did you hear what he said about Jesus? 'This man has done nothing wrong.' This thief can see that Jesus is righteous. Jesus has done nothing wrong. Then this man turns to Jesus and they talk together. 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' Jesus answered him, 'Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.' This second criminal is unrighteous, but Jesus says, when this criminal dies and then meets God he will not be punished for his unrighteousness. He will be welcomed as a friend of God.

How is that possible? A swap happened. Three men died. If you look at these labels on our picture you can see who should have been rightly punished for being unrighteous. But a swap happened. Jesus and the second criminal did not move physically. But it's like their labels switched around. [Switch labels on the visual] Jesus was righteous, but he took the punishment that the second criminal deserved. Jesus died for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous. Jesus the righteous died for the unrighteous second criminal.

After Jesus spoke to the second criminal darkness came over the whole land. It was completely dark in the middle of the day for three hours. The sun stopped shining. The darkness showed God's right anger against unrighteous people. But all this anger was directed at Jesus. God directed his right anger at Jesus that day because Jesus had taken the unrighteousness of all his people.

We are all unrighteous and so we should be rightly punished by God. But here is the good news. Because God loves us so much he sent his Son, Jesus Christ, 'the Righteous One', to die for the unrighteous. At the cross Jesus died instead of his people. A swap happened. The second criminal died but before he died he admitted his unrighteousness and believed in Jesus. The second criminal is with God now. He is God's

friend. Why? Because Jesus swapped with him. The righteous died for the unrighteous. The first criminal died and did not admit he was unrighteous and turn to Jesus, and so God is still rightly angry with him.

According to the Bible everyone is like the two criminals on the cross. Which one do you think you are like?

If you do not turn to Jesus then you will be punished by God for your unrighteousness. You will not be welcomed by God when you die. You are like the first criminal on the cross. If you admit you are unrighteous and you turn to Jesus then you are like the second criminal. You deserve to be punished by God, but Jesus died to take the punishment in your place. You will be welcomed by God when you die.

Let's thank God for Jesus and ask him to help us be like the second criminal.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- How did the two different criminals respond to Jesus?
- What does Jesus tell the second criminal will happen 'today'?
  - How is this possible for a criminal who deserves to die?
- From what we've heard, what amazes you about Jesus?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you that you are so kind and loving to send Jesus to die for unrighteous people like us
- C We confess that we are unrighteous and deserve to be punished for our sin
- T Thank you that Jesus died in the place of sinners like us
- S Please help us to be more and more amazed at what you have done to save us

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

Read Luke 23:32–43

- Look at verse 39: what does the criminal say to Jesus?
- Look at verse 42: what does the other criminal say to Jesus?

Think:

- Why can Jesus say to the second criminal what he says in v43? Surely this criminal should be punished by God for doing wrong when he was alive?
- Think: everyone in the world is like one of the criminals. Which of the two criminals are you like and why?
- Think: how does this week's story make you feel about Jesus?

## ACTIVITY: DRAMA

Act out Luke 23:32–43.

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?			
Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?			
What characters will we need to play?			
Who is going to play each character?			
What props might we want to use?			
What shall be the title of our play?			

Now that you've prepared, off you go.

## SONG OF THE WEEK

'He died upon the cross'—Colin Buchanan <https://youtu.be/WWTfCEOVHK4>

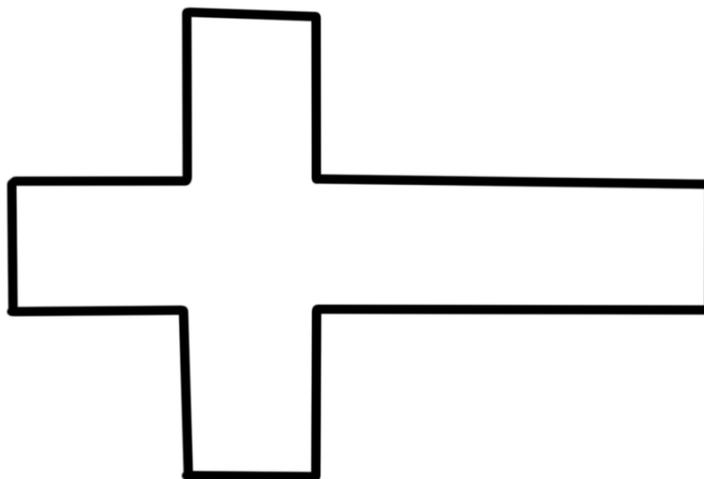
## ACTIVITY: CRAFT

1. On the background sheet (below), draw 'you' and colour in the cross.
2. Cut out the 'righteous' and 'unrighteous' tag and add blue tack to the back.
3. Stick the righteous tag on the cross where Jesus died, and the unrighteous tag on 'you'.
4. The tags can be switched to show the swap that happened between you and Jesus on the cross.

**RIGHTEOUS**

**UNRIGHTEOUS**

**Jesus died a sinner's death, for us (Luke 23)**



Draw you

## Week 7

### Pre-school age: John 20

#### TEACHING CONCEPT

- Jesus came alive for sinners like us. Thank you, God

Explanation: because Jesus came alive, we can know that sinners like us will come alive again if we trust in Jesus. When we die it is not the end. If we trust in Jesus he will make us come alive at the end of time.

#### ACTION RHYME

\* To the tune of... 'B-I-N-G-O', an American nursery rhyme

Jesus is not dead, no, Jesus is a-live  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is a-live

#### BIBLE VERSE

“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” Luke 24:5b-6a

#### GROUP TIME: GAME

'Jesus is alive!'

1. Walk around and point out as many things as you can that are alive, eg other children, a houseplant brought in by a leader, leaders.
2. Every time you spot something that is alive, you have to shout as loud as you can 'Jesus is alive too!'

## **STORY: JESUS—HE CAME ALIVE FOR SINNERS LIKE US**

I've got something to show you. It is small. I'm going to show it to you now. It's a fly [show dead fly]. What's wrong with this fly? It is dead. That means it cannot move by itself. It cannot breathe. There is no life in it. This fly cannot fly. It cannot do anything. It is dead.

Last time we heard that Jesus died on the cross. He died to take the punishment for sin. Jesus was dead. He was definitely dead. He could not move. He did not breathe. There was no life in his body. After Jesus died his body was put in a special place. I have a picture here [Picture of a tomb]. This is a tomb. A tomb is a cave in some rocks where a dead body is put. The dead body of Jesus was put in a tomb. Then a big stone was rolled over the way into the tomb. The big stone was like a big door that could not be moved.

But Jesus did not stay dead. This is what happened. Three days after the dead body of Jesus was put in the tomb a lady called Mary Magdalene went to visit. When Mary got to the tomb, she saw something strange. The big stone had been moved! Mary thought that the body of Jesus had gone too. She ran to tell Peter and John, "They've taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and John went to look. They went inside the tomb. The body of Jesus was not there! His clothes were there, folded up nicely, but he was gone. What had happened? The stone had been moved and the tomb was empty. Where was Jesus?

Mary was outside the tomb. She was very upset. She was crying. A man came up to her and said, "Why are you crying?" So Mary told the man, "They've taken my Lord away... and I don't know where they have put him." Mary did not know who the man was. "Have you taken him away?" Mary asked. Then the man said to her, "Mary." Suddenly Mary realised who the man was. She was talking to Jesus! Jesus was not dead. He was now alive! Mary ran off to tell the other friends of Jesus this wonderful news.

Jesus is alive today. After being dead, God made him come alive again. Later Jesus went back up to heaven to be with God his Father forever. That is where Jesus is now. Jesus is alive today. This is good news. Jesus did not stay dead. God made him come alive.

One day we will die. We won't be alive. Our bodies won't move. We won't breathe. This will be very sad for our friends and family. But if we believe in Jesus, we won't stay dead. Just like Jesus came alive again, if we believe in Jesus, we will come alive again too. Because Jesus came alive again, we can know for sure that friends of Jesus will come alive again. This won't happen straight away. It will happen at the end. At the end everyone who is a friend of Jesus will come alive and live with Jesus forever. This is good news for us!

## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

Make a paper plate tomb. (Week 7 and week 8\*)

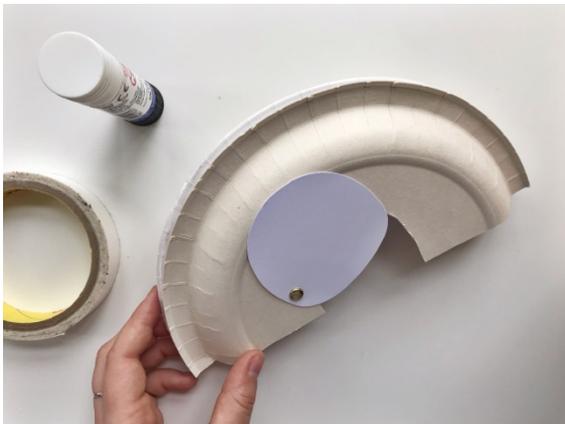
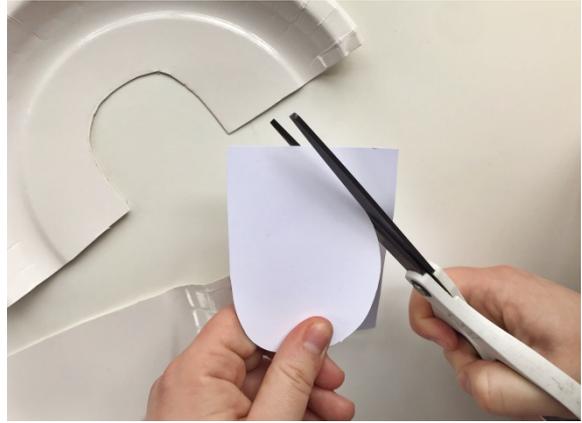
You will need:

- Paper plate (if you don't have a paper plate you could cut out two semi-circles of paper)
- Scissors
- Split pin
- Card
- Colouring pencils or crayons
- Glue, stapler or double sided tape

How to make:

1. Cut the plate in half and then cut out a hole for the entrance
2. Using the card, cut a stone shape a bit bigger than the hole
3. Pierce a hole through the stone and side of the hole with a pencil or pen
4. Push the split pin through the stone and attach to the tomb
5. Attach the top edges of the two halves of the paper plate together with glue, staples or double sided tape
6. Colour in
7. Extra idea: you could draw Jesus outside the tomb

\*Anything incomplete from week 7 can be completed during week 8.



## School age: Philippians 2:9–11

### JESUS—JESUS WAS RAISED TO LIFE AGAIN, FOR US

Last week we began to hear the good news about Jesus. The good news is about Jesus' life and about Jesus' death. I'm going to show you two pictures. This first picture is to remind you of Jesus' life [picture of a cradle]. It's a cradle. A cradle is another name for somewhere you put a baby. This is to remind us that Jesus really lived on earth. He was born as a human baby and then grew up and lived a perfectly righteous life. Here's the second picture [picture of a cross]. This one is more obvious. It is a simple picture of a cross. So here we have two pictures to help you remember the good news: a cradle and a cross—life and death. The good news is that Jesus lived and died for sinners like us.

Remember again the problem we all have. God is righteous. He always has done the right thing and he always will do the right thing. We are unrighteous. All of us here, you and me, all the leaders and all the children, are rebels against God. Because God is righteous he cannot ignore our rebellion. God is rightly angry at our unrighteousness and he is right to punish our wrongdoing.

But God didn't just leave us with the bad news. Over the last few weeks we have heard the good news (the gospel) about Jesus. God sent Jesus to earth. God sent Jesus to earth to die on the cross. On the cross a swap took place. Jesus, who was completely righteous, Jesus who always did the right thing, swapped places with us, the unrighteous, who have done wrong things. When Jesus died on the cross God punished Jesus as if he was unrighteous. At the cross Jesus died for the wrongdoing of others. He died for sinners like you and me. This is the good news: Jesus lived and died for sinners. Cradle and cross. Life and death.

But the good news has not finished. There is one more bit to come. Jesus lived and died. But what about after that? Was that it? Did Jesus stay dead? Where is Jesus now? The New Testament part of the Bible includes lots of letters that people wrote. In one of the letters written by a man called Paul, it tells us what happened to Jesus after he died. Paul wrote in his letter about a journey Jesus took. This journey was unusual. It went down and up again. It wasn't about the places Jesus went, but about how important and impressive Jesus was. Listen to this: [read Philippians 2:5–8].

This journey began with Jesus in heaven and that's a very important place to be. Paul even says that Jesus is God and so Jesus is equal with God. Jesus starts the journey as a very important person. Then Jesus came down to be a human, to live on the earth. Being a human on earth, that's not as important as being in heaven. Then on earth Jesus went down even further and became a servant of other people. Being a servant is not very impressive. Then as a servant Jesus went down even further. Jesus obeyed what God said and went to die on the cross. Dying on a cross was the lowest of the low. Only criminals went to die on a cross. But Jesus went even lower. As he died on the cross Jesus was punished by God; God was angry at Jesus. So far this journey has gone down, down, down. The dead body of Jesus was taken down from the cross and put in an empty tomb.

But this was not the end of the journey Jesus made. Listen to what Paul wrote next. Paul wrote this [read 2:9–11]. Paul is telling us that Jesus did not stay dead. God raised Jesus from the dead. We know that Jesus did not stay dead because it says so in the Bible. Jesus was seen alive again after he was dead. He walked with people and talked with people. People saw Jesus and touched him and ate food with him. Jesus was definitely alive again.

But Jesus had not finished his journey yet. God took Jesus all the way back to heaven. That is where Jesus is now. Jesus is alive, with God in heaven. And Paul says God gave Jesus the highest and most important place

and God gave Jesus the name that is above every name. That means God has made Jesus the most important and powerful king ever. I've got a picture for that [picture of a crown]. It's a crown. Paul says Jesus is alive and he is king in heaven and everyone should follow Jesus as their king. Paul says 'that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should say that Jesus Christ is Lord.'

Because Jesus was raised from the dead, and God has made him king over everything, his work on the cross is complete. Jesus rules over everything; over sin and death, over you and me. Jesus rules over everyone in the whole world. Paul says that everyone in the whole world should bow their knee [kneel]. That doesn't mean we should all walk around on our knees all day, or that we should constantly be bowing to Jesus. Bowing to someone is a mark of respect. If you kneel before someone, it's a sign that you know they are in charge of you, that you are going to listen to them and do what they say. We don't need to bow our knees constantly, but we do need to know that Jesus is in charge of us; we should listen to him and do what he says, because God has raised him to be ruler of the whole world.

Bowing to someone and having them in charge might sound like a bad thing. But it's not a bad thing to have Jesus in charge. In fact it is good news for us that God raised Jesus to rule over everyone. It's good to have Jesus as king because remember Jesus is righteous; he always does the right thing. As king, Jesus always does the right thing. Living under Jesus' rule is the best place to be. Everyone who follows Jesus as their king knows that Jesus has died for them, everyone who follows Jesus as their King knows that they have been forgiven.

This is the good news: cradle, cross, crown. Jesus lived, died, and was raised to life, for sinners. This is how much God loves us. God sent his son Jesus to save us from the punishment we rightly deserve. Now God has made Jesus king over everything.

Let's thank God for raising Jesus from the dead to be king over us.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- What happened to Jesus after he died?
- Where is Jesus now?
- Why is it a good thing that Jesus rules over us?
- How can we honour and serve our king this week? (Eg listen to his words in the Bible)

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you for... raising Jesus from the dead!
- C We are sorry... for our sin that meant Jesus had to die.
- T Thank you... for making Jesus king over everything
- S Please... help us to live with Jesus as our king

## **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

Re-read Philippians 2:5–11

- Describe the ‘down–and–up’ journey that Jesus took (hint: cradle–cross–crown)
  - What does it mean that Jesus’ name is above every other name?
  - What does it mean that every knee should bow to Jesus?

Think:

- What does this passage show us about how important Jesus is?
- Why is it such a good thing that Jesus is king?
- How should we respond to King Jesus, and why?

## **ACTIVITY: GAME**

1. Hide pictures of a cradle, cross and crown along with descriptions of each of these pictures (see below).
2. Set a timer for 5 to 10 minutes.
3. Set everyone off to find all the pictures and descriptions.
4. Once they’ve all been found, match the pictures to the descriptions.

The aim of the game is to find and match the pictures and descriptions before the timer runs out!

Example recap questions:

- What did Jesus do when he came to earth?
- Did Jesus stay dead?
- Where is Jesus now?
- Name somewhere/someone that/who is under King Jesus.
- What will happen when people hear Jesus’ name?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

‘Super Saviour’—Colin Buchanan

This song reminds us that Jesus has defeated death in rising from the grave. It reminds us that we can be saved from sin and death through Jesus, our Saviour.

Have a go at making up some fun actions to help you remember the words of the song!

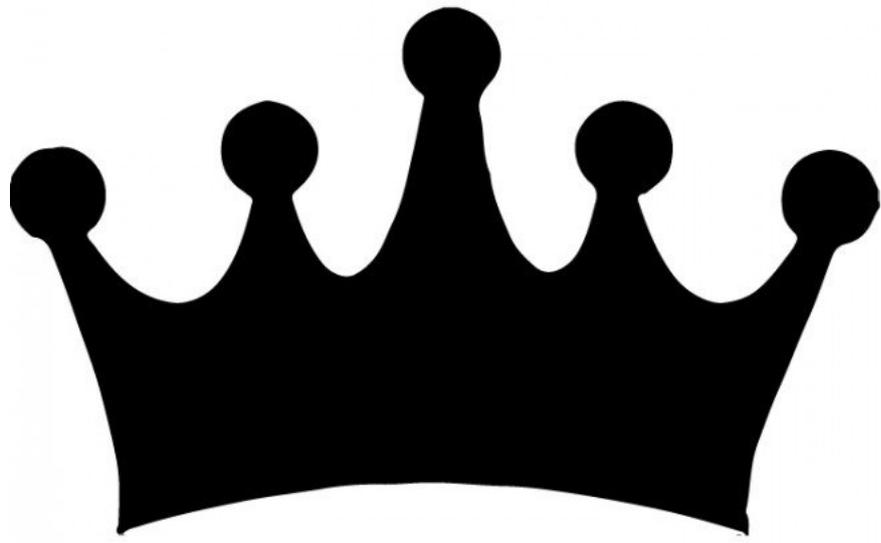
## **ACTIVITY: DRAMA**

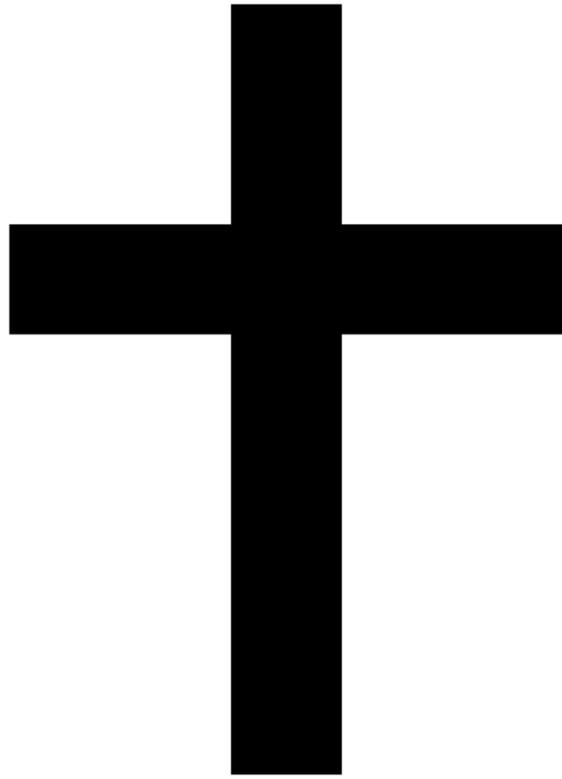
Act out the events in Philippians 2:5–11.

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

<p>What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?</p>			
<p>Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?</p>			
<p>What characters will we need to play?</p>			
<p>Who is going to play each character?</p>			
<p>What props might we want to use?</p>			
<p>What shall be the title of our play?</p>			

Now that you've prepared, off you go.





God made Jesus the most important and powerful king ever.

Jesus was born as a human being and lived the perfect life.

Jesus died on the cross for the wrongdoing of sinners like you and me.

## Week 8

### Pre-school age: John 20

#### TEACHING CONCEPT

- Jesus came alive for sinners like us. Thank you, God

Explanation: Because Jesus came alive, we can know that sinners like us will come alive again if we trust in Jesus. When we die it is not the end. If we trust in Jesus he will make us come alive at the end of time.

#### ACTION RHYME

\* To the tune of... 'B-I-N-G-O', an American nursery rhyme

Jesus is not dead, no, Jesus is a-live  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is not dead, no!  
Jesus is a-live

#### BIBLE VERSE

““Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” Luke 24:5b–6a

#### GROUP TIME: GAME

This game is modelled on the pirate themed game 'captain's coming'.

How to play:

One person is the 'captain', who will call out the commands. Commands are called out in order first but then can be in a random order and repeated for as long as you want the game to last. To make it harder, call out commands one after the other getting faster as you go. Everyone else should stand in the centre of the space, ready to respond to the commands with the appropriate action. Why not add your own commands and actions to the list?

Commands and actions:

1. Command: 'Jesus died on the cross'. Action: stand with arms open wide
2. Command: 'Jesus was buried in a tomb'. Action: lie down on the floor
3. Command: 'a stone sealed the tomb'. Action: do a roly poly
4. Command: 'Jesus came alive again!' Action: jump up in the air

5. Command: 'one day we will die'. Action: lie down on the floor
6. Command: 'because Jesus came alive again, we will too!' Action: jump up in the air

### **STORY: JESUS—HE CAME ALIVE FOR SINNERS LIKE US**

I've got something to show you. It is small. I'm going to show it to you now. It's a fly [show dead fly]. What's wrong with this fly? It is dead. That means it cannot move by itself. It cannot breathe. There is no life in it. This fly cannot fly. It cannot do anything. It is dead.

Last time we heard that Jesus died on the cross. He died to take the punishment for sin. Jesus was dead. He was definitely dead. He could not move. He did not breathe. There was no life in his body. After Jesus died his body was put in a special place. I have a picture here [Picture of a tomb]. This is a tomb. A tomb is a cave in some rocks where a dead body is put. The dead body of Jesus was put in a tomb. Then a big stone was rolled over the way into the tomb. The big stone was like a big door that could not be moved.

But Jesus did not stay dead. This is what happened. Three days after the dead body of Jesus was put in the tomb a lady called Mary Magdalene went to visit. When Mary got to the tomb, she saw something strange. The big stone had been moved! Mary thought that the body of Jesus had gone too. She ran to tell Peter and John, "They've taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and John went to look. They went inside the tomb. The body of Jesus was not there! His clothes were there, folded up nicely, but he was gone. What had happened? The stone had been moved and the tomb was empty. Where was Jesus?

Mary was outside the tomb. She was very upset. She was crying. A man came up to her and said, "Why are you crying?" So Mary told the man, "They've taken my Lord away... and I don't know where they have put him." Mary did not know who the man was. "Have you taken him away?" Mary asked. Then the man said to her, "Mary." Suddenly Mary realised who the man was. She was talking to Jesus! Jesus was not dead. He was now alive! Mary ran off to tell the other friends of Jesus this wonderful news.

Jesus is alive today. After being dead, God made him come alive again. Later Jesus went back up to heaven to be with God his Father forever. That is where Jesus is now. Jesus is alive today. This is good news. Jesus did not stay dead. God made him come alive.

One day we will die. We won't be alive. Our bodies won't move. We won't breathe. This will be very sad for our friends and family. But if we believe in Jesus, we won't stay dead. Just like Jesus came alive again, if we believe in Jesus, we will come alive again too. Because Jesus came alive again, we can know for sure that friends of Jesus will come alive again. This won't happen straight away. It will happen at the end. At the end everyone who is a friend of Jesus will come alive and live with Jesus forever. This is good news for us!

### **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

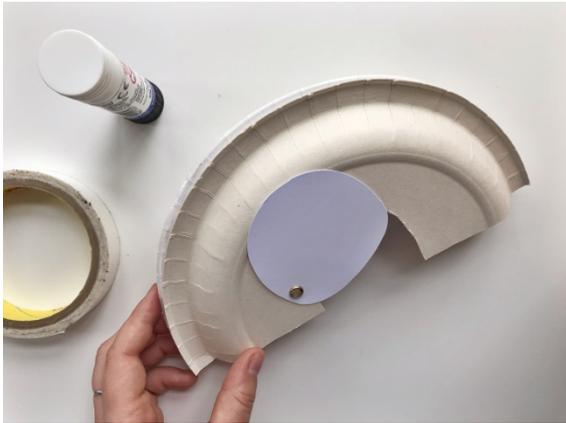
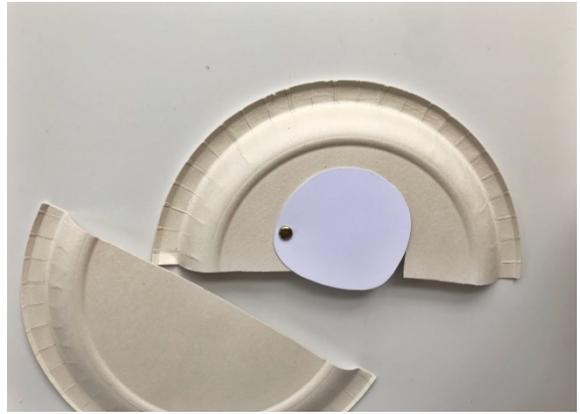
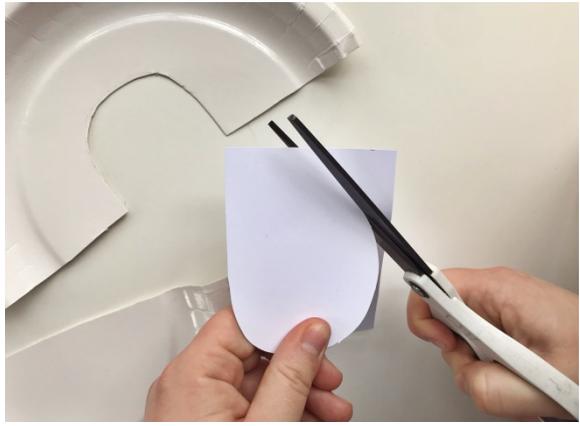
Make a paper plate tomb. (Week 7 and week 8\*. Continue from where you left off last week.)

You will need:

- Paper plate (if you don't have a paper plate you could cut out two semi-circles of paper)
- Scissors
- Split pin
- Card
- Colouring pencils or crayons
- Glue, stapler or double sided tape

How to make:

1. Cut the plate in half and then cut out a hole for the entrance
2. Using the card, cut a stone shape a bit bigger than the hole
3. Pierce a hole through the stone and side of the hole with a pencil or pen
4. Push the split pin through the stone and attach to the tomb
5. Attach the top edges of the two halves of the paper plate together with glue, staples or double sided tape
6. Colour in
7. Extra ideas:
  - You could draw Jesus outside the tomb
  - You could draw and cut Jesus out of card and use it to act out the story
  - You could stick your tomb onto a green piece of card or paper for the garden



## School age: Romans 5:6–8

### THE LOVING SWAP

I have three things to show you: An ostrich, a wallet/purse, and a DVD. [Have visuals/props of these.] These three things will help us with what we're learning in this lesson. Before we get to these objects though, we need to do some recapping. This term we have been learning about the gospel—the good news. Remember the bad news: we are unrighteous. All of us are born unrighteous. We are sinners. We are rebels against God. God is righteous, he is fair. God cannot ignore our unrighteousness. God is rightly angry and will punish our rebellion against him. So this is the problem we all face. We have a big problem: we are all unrighteous and God is righteous. What should we do about this problem? Today's lesson is about how different people try to solve the problem of this bad news. This is where our pictures help.

Solution #1—the ostrich solution: pretend there is no problem. Ostriches are famous for one main thing: when they see danger, they bury their head in the ground. If their head is in the ground then they can't see the danger. Which must mean it's safe. Does that work? Does the danger disappear? No of course not. Imagine the danger is a big predator like a lion. Burying your head in the sand doesn't take the Lion away. The danger is still there. But does the ostrich feel better? Yes! The ostrich feels it is now safe. But in fact it is still in danger.

The Bible says it can be like this with us. We have heard about the problem we have: our unrighteousness. We have heard about the danger that brings: God's right anger and punishment. Some people at this point then act like an ostrich. They stick their head in the sand and ignore the problem. They might say, "I'm not actually unrighteous, I'm fine." Or, "God is not actually angry with me, I am his friend, I don't need Jesus". Lots of people are like this. Maybe you are too. But acting like an ostrich and ignoring the problem does not take the problem away: we are still unrighteous. The apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Roman church [Read Romans 3:10–12]. Acting like an ostrich does not stop the danger we are in: we are still unrighteous and God is still rightly angry with us. Being like an ostrich does not work. But what about the wallet?

Solution #2 the wallet solution: paying your own way. Wallets and purses are used to keep money in. We need money to pay for things. Sometimes we use money to pay for nice things like food from a shop or movies online. But sometimes people have to pay for things that aren't so nice like fines. For example, when someone parks in the wrong place or drives too fast, they get given a fine to pay. They get out their wallet and pay the fine. Once they have paid the fine that is it. They have paid the fine; they won't be in trouble anymore.

Some people think that it's a bit like this with God that he has issued them with a fine for their sin. Some people think they can pay God's fine so that they are not in trouble with him anymore. They think that they can pay God, not with money from their real wallet, but pay God with good deeds from their spiritual wallet. They think that if they do enough good things then they won't be in trouble with God anymore for their sin.

But this doesn't work. God tells us in the Bible that it doesn't matter how good we try and be, we will never be good enough. This is what Paul says again to the church in Rome [Read Romans 3:20 or v23]. God tells us there is nothing we can do to pay for our rebellion against him; there is nothing we can do on our own to avoid the punishment for our sin. Getting out our spiritual wallet doesn't work. So if ignoring the problem doesn't solve it, and defending yourself doesn't solve it either, what does? Now it's time for the last object: the DVD. You might wonder what a DVD has to do with this.

Solution #3 the DVD solution: Jesus swapped places with us. Listen to this verse from the Bible, again from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome [Read Romans 5:8]. Giving presents is a really nice thing to do isn't it. Giving someone a gift, is one way of showing them that you love them. But God has an even better way of showing people that he loves them. God shows his love for us, by sending Jesus to swap something with us. God shows us his love in this swap. Let me explain.

[Have two DVD boxes, one labelled 'Me' the other 'Jesus'. Both with a blank disk in] I want you to imagine this is a DVD of your life. Everything you have ever done is recorded here; all the good things as well as all the bad. This DVD of your life shows that you are unrighteous, and that God should be rightly angry with you [write 'unrighteous' on the DVD in the 'Me' box]. Now here's another DVD. Pretend this DVD is of Jesus' life. Everything Jesus ever did is recorded here. This DVD shows Jesus is perfectly righteous [write 'Righteous' on the DVD in the 'Jesus' box]. At the cross a swap happened. Jesus swapped his life with every unrighteous sinner who would ever believe in him. If you trust in Jesus it's like you have been given Jesus' DVD and Jesus has been given your DVD [swap the disks]. When God looks at the DVD of your life, he will not see your unrighteousness. Instead God sees the righteous life of Jesus. But also if you trust in Jesus then when God looked at Jesus on the cross he saw your unrighteous life and punished Jesus for it instead of you. This is the big swap that God made with us.

When Jesus died on the cross, he knew that this swap was going to happen. Jesus knew that he was dying in our place. Jesus didn't wait for everyone to be good to make this swap. Jesus didn't wait until everyone was righteous. Jesus knew that wasn't going to happen. Instead Jesus chose to die in our place when we were still sinners. Jesus decided to swap places with us and take the punishment we deserve. This swap shows us how much God loves us. God was willing to punish Jesus instead of us. That must mean God loves us very much.

There is only one solution to our sin problem. Burying your head in the sand like an ostrich will not solve your sin problem. Getting your wallet out and trying to buy your way out of punishment will not solve your sin problem. Only depending on what God has done for us in the big swap will solve our sin problem. Jesus dying on the cross is not just good news, it's the best news we could ever hear and it's the best news we could ever share. Everyone needs to know the best news so that they can swap places with Jesus too. Let's thank God for Jesus.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- Can you remember from the story some of the ways we try to solve the problem of our sin?
  - Why don't these work?
- What is God's solution?
  - Why does it work?
- How does this amazing gift from God show us his love for us?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you for your son Jesus who died instead of us so that we can be friends with you
- C We are sorry that often we try to fix the problem of our sin ourselves
- T Thank you for your amazing love for us in sending your son
- S Please help us to understand the gift you have given us and want our friends to receive it too

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

[Read Romans 5:6–8]

- What do v6 and v8 say we were before Christ died for us?
- From the story what are some of the ways people try to solve the problem of their sin?
  - Why don't these work?
- What does verse 8 say is God's solution?
  - Why does this way work?
- What can we say to someone who says that 'God doesn't love us'?
- Write down how this big swap makes you feel.

### **ACTIVITY: MEMORY VERSE**

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

1. Find the memory verse
  - a. For older children, get them to help each other find the verse in their Bibles.
  - b. For the younger children, hide a box in the room (the 'memory verse box') that is labelled 'memory verse', and get the children to find it. Inside this box have the memory verse printed out in easy to read size and font along with any other materials you will need for this activity.)
2. Read the memory verse.
  - a. Read the memory verse by yourself
3. Discussion
  - a. What's your favourite bit? Why?
4. Game: 'memory verse ping pong'
  - a. Get two children to stand opposite one another.
  - b. They now throw a ball between them.
  - c. Each time they catch the ball they must say the next word of the memory verse.
  - d. If a child gets the word wrong, they swap out or start again.

### **SONG OF THE WEEK**

'Mighty mighty Saviour'—Sovereign Grace Music

## ACTIVITY: CRAFT

DVD swap.

In this craft you can create the visual aid mentioned in the story.

You will need:

- 2x old DVDs that you no longer want to use\*
- Paper
- Colouring pencils or pens

How to make:

- Use the boxes and DVD's to draw round and cut out on a piece of paper. You should end up with two circles and two rectangles.
- Use the rectangles to make a cover for each of the DVD cases and the circles to stick on to the DVD discs.
- On one DVD case write 'Jesus' and on the DVD disc write 'perfectly righteous life'
- On the other DVD case write your name and on the DVD disc write 'sinful life'
- Colour in the cases and DVD discs and assemble
- Use these to retell the story

\*Alternative: if you don't have spare DVDs you could use envelopes and pieces of card inside

## Week 9

Pre-school age: Luke 18:9–14

### TEACHING CONCEPT

- God forgives all who trust in Jesus

### ACTION RHYME

\*To the tune of 'Greensleeves'

Jesus died for sinners like us  
Jesus died for sinners like us  
So say sorry for your sin and trust in him  
Say sorry for your sin and trust in him

### BIBLE VERSE

'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Luke 18:13b

### GROUP TIME: GAME

Re-enact a scene from Titanic

It's time to get your director's cap on! Re-enact the final scene from Titanic. Use cushions, pillows, or cardboard boxes to make an imaginary boat.

Version 1: silly version. The Titanic is sinking! The ship is sinking and everything's falling into the sea. But the people on-board are too proud to ask for help. They think they can fix the boat all by themselves. As a result, the boat falls apart and everyone gets wet. (This is excellent opportunity to use water guns if you're doing this outdoors—especially if the boat is made of cardboard!)

Version 2: happy ending version. The Titanic is sinking! The ship is sinking and everything's falling into the sea. The passengers know they can't help themselves and shout for help. Thankfully, another ship arrives, comes to the rescue, and everyone is safe.

## **STORY: US—GOD FORGIVES ALL WHO TRUST IN JESUS**

Think in your head for a moment: who are your friends? What are their names? Don't shout out, put your hands up. [Ask a few of the children who their friends are]. In our story today we are thinking about who can be friends with God. Jesus met some people who didn't think they needed Jesus to die for them. They thought they were really good and they thought they were already friends with God.

Jesus told them a story. One day, a Pharisee and a tax collector went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thought he was really good. Because he thought he was good he thought he was already friends with God. He stood up and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not a bad man—I don't steal, I don't do bad things, and I'm not like that tax collector over there. I do good things."

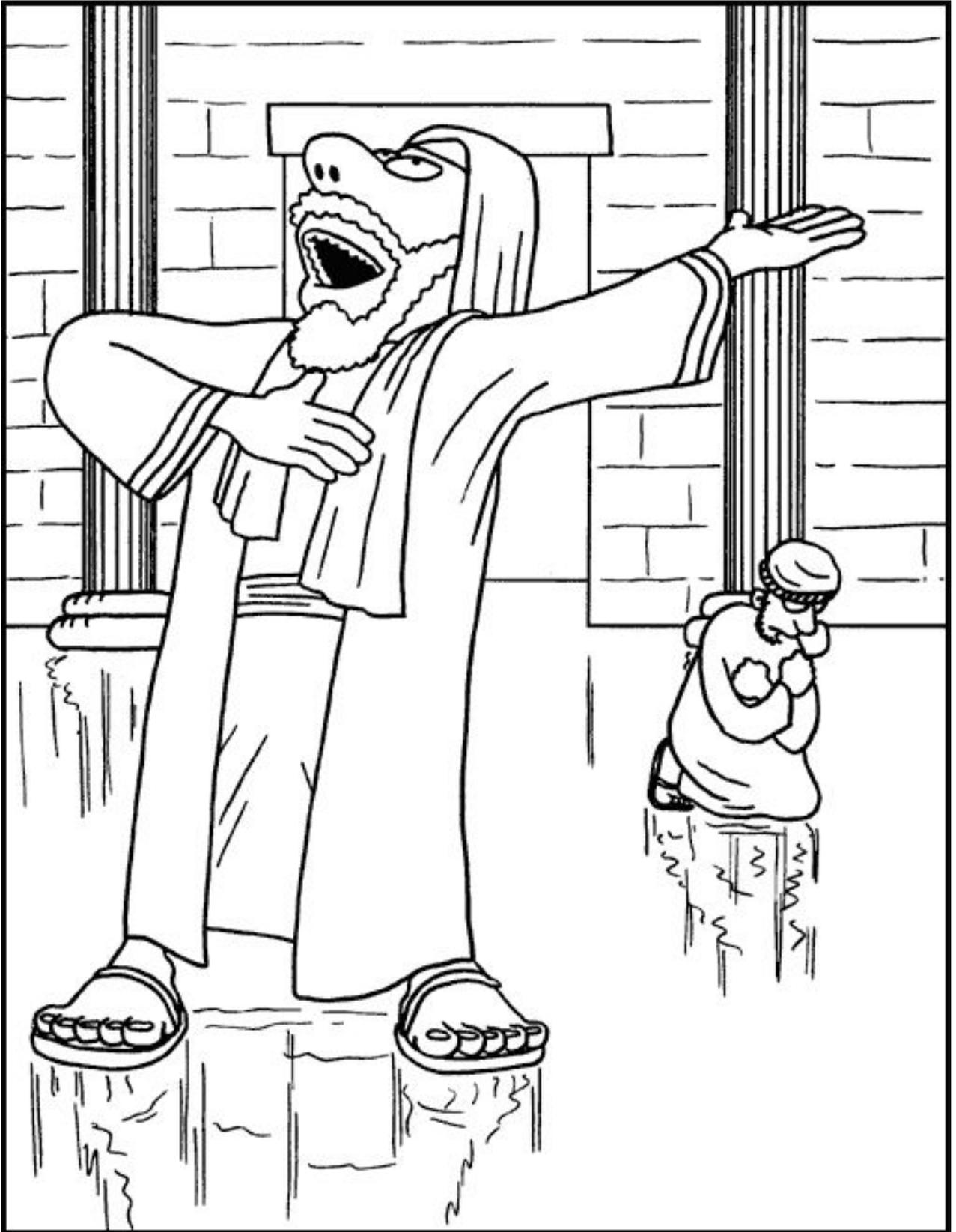
But the tax collector stood a long way away because he knew he had done bad things. Because he'd done bad things he knew that he couldn't be friends with God. He knew that God should punish him and he would not even look up. He cried out, "God have mercy on me a sinner." This means "God please forgive me, I have sinned against you."

Because the tax collector asked God to forgive him, he wasn't punished by God. The tax collector went home friends with God. But the Pharisee thought he was good and so he didn't ask God to forgive him, so in the end he was punished by God for his bad heart. The Pharisee thought he was friends with God, but he wasn't.

We've been learning that we all sin against God. We all do bad things and God should punish us all. None of us should be friends with God. But God sent Jesus to die instead of bad people like us. Jesus was punished instead of sinners like us. Jesus died so that we could be friends with God. All we need to do is say sorry to God for our sin. We need to be like the tax collector. We need to realise that we do bad things and ask God to forgive us. Only when we tell God that we are sorry for our sin can we be friends with him.

## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

Colour in the picture of the Pharisee and the tax collector on the following page.



## School age: Luke 18:9–14

### REPENTANCE: WE NEED GOD'S MERCY

I want to tell you about two children: Arthur and Benjamin. Arthur and Benjamin are both 10 years old. They go to the same school and are in the same class. But they are very different from each other. Arthur hates PE. He hates games. You see, Arthur can't catch a ball very well. To be honest he can't throw it very well either. The bit Arthur hates the most about PE is when the teams are picked. Only 11 children can be picked for the school cricket team. Arthur wants to be included in the team, but he never is. He's not good enough. This makes him feel sad and left out. That's why Arthur hates PE.

Benjamin, though, is good at throwing. Benjamin is good at catching too. Every time the school cricket team is picked he's normally one of the first chosen. He's normally included in all the best teams. Benjamin loves PE. He loves games outside. Arthur and Benjamin are so different. When it's time to play games outside Arthur gets very sad. He knows he's not any good. He knows no one wants to include him. He wishes games time would disappear. But Benjamin is very happy about game time. He knows he's very good at them. He knows he'll always be included in the best team. In fact, Benjamin likes to boast about how good he is and he looks down on Arthur. Benjamin thinks Arthur is not as good as he is.

You might think it's a bit like this with God. You might think that if you are really good at things then God will like you more. You might think that God really likes you because you are never in trouble at school and because you have lots of friends who say you are a nice person. Or you might think that God doesn't like you because you are not well behaved. You might think that God isn't interested in you because you are often in trouble and you don't have many friends. Well, let's find out. Today we are going to find out if God treats people who think they are good at things, better than the people who don't?

Today's story is all about how someone is included in the big swap with Jesus. Remember the swap with the second criminal. As Jesus died on the cross, he took the unrighteousness of the second criminal, and gave the second criminal Jesus' own righteousness. How can you and I be included in this swap? Remember the swap with the DVD from last week, how Jesus took our unrighteous life and gave us his righteous life. How can we be given the righteousness of Jesus and have our unrighteousness given to Jesus? How can you be included? Today, we are going to find out how we can be included in the swap with Jesus. We will find out from a story that Jesus told. This story is called a parable. And Jesus told this story to a particular group of people. Listen to what it says in the Bible [read Luke 18:9]

Jesus tells this story to people who think they are righteous. These people think they are righteous because they do lots of good things. These people think that they are already included in God's team. These people think they are included in God's team because they are well behaved—they usually do the right thing. They think that God will be pleased with them because they behave well. That's what it means for them to be confident in their own righteousness. Not only are they confident in their own righteousness but when these people see someone who doesn't behave as well as them, they look down on them.

Let's hear the story Jesus told to these people. [Read Luke 9:10–14] — get children/leaders to act out the story as you read it.

So here are these two men. One is a Pharisee the other is a tax collector. A Pharisee is someone who usually did the right thing. He did not steal anything that didn't belong to him. He had not murdered anyone. He did give money away and he did try to do other good things. Does usually doing the right thing mean you are righteous? This Pharisee thought so. This Pharisee usually did the right thing. Because he usually did

the right thing, this Pharisee thought he was better than other people. He was proud. He thought he must be included in God's team. He thought he must be on God's side. But the Pharisee was wrong. You don't get included on God's side by usually being good or by behaving well. Thinking that you are better than other people is not the way you get included. Thinking that you are already righteous is not the way you get included.

We've already learned that there is no one who is righteous, not even one. The way onto God's side is to admit you are wrong. Admit that you are unrighteous. The tax collector knew he was unrighteous. The tax collector knew he deserved to be punished by God. He was guilty. He admits it. That's why he asks for mercy. 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' mercy means not getting the punishment you deserve. The tax collector is asking God not to punish him for his sin. He knows he deserves it. But he asks for God's mercy.

Two men went to the temple to pray. Only one of them went home justified before God. Justified means counted as righteous before God. Only one of them was included in the swap Jesus makes. It was the tax collector.

This week we have been hearing the good news of the gospel—God is righteous; but we are all unrighteous. Jesus can take our unrighteousness and give us his righteousness. How can we be included in this swap? The Pharisee has got it wrong. We are not included by trying to behave better than other people. We are not included by thinking we are already righteous. That is the wrong way to think about the good news. But the tax collector got it right. Like him we must admit that we are unrighteous and call to God for mercy. If we admit our unrighteousness and trust in Jesus dying on the cross for us, we are included! We are given Jesus' righteousness, and we will not be punished for our own unrighteousness. It's as simple as that. Admit you are unrighteous, and trust in Jesus.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- Have you ever needed help with something but didn't ask for it? (Eg homework, getting something from a shelf, being lost somewhere etc)
- Have you ever thought that you were better than someone else because you are well-behaved/nice to others/go to Sunday school?
- Why do all of us need to ask for mercy? Why do all of us need Jesus?
- Everyone needs Jesus because we are all unrighteous before God. When we talk to God, should we talk like the Pharisee or should we talk like the tax collector?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray in response to the story:

- A We praise you for saving us by taking our place on the cross.
- C We are sorry for all the times when we thought we don't need your help.
- T Thank you, Jesus, that you chose to die for unrighteous sinners like us.
- S Please have mercy on us.

## **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

- Think about this week's story and what we've learnt in the past few weeks. Why is everyone unrighteous before God?
- Read Luke 18:9–14 out loud. Act out what the Pharisee and the tax collector do in the passage.
- Why is it important for everyone to ask for mercy?
- Think of a time when you thought you didn't need Jesus' help, or when you thought you needed Jesus' help less than others because of how well you behaved. Say sorry to God and ask him to help us remember that all of us need his mercy.

## **ACTIVITY: GAME**

### Tight Rope Walk

1. Mark out a short line on the ground with a long piece of string/tape. Have a prize at the end of the line (food/a toy).
2. The aim is to walk from one end of the line to the prize at the other end. Ask the recap questions. For every correct answer, your child/children can take one step forward.
3. But there's a twist! They must balance books on their head as they do so. If you drop any books, or step off the line they must start again. (The idea is for them to fail.)
4. After a few failed attempts have mercy on them by getting the prize and giving it to them. (Before this, you could get them to act out Luke 9:13.)

Example recap questions:

- Why is everyone unrighteous before God?
- What did Jesus do on the cross for unrighteous people who trust in him?
- Why does everyone need mercy?
- What did the Pharisee do in the Bible story?
- What did the tax collector do in the Bible story?
- Why does the Pharisee think he doesn't need God's mercy? Why is that wrong?
- How can we be made righteous? What can we say to Jesus?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

'He overflows with Love'—Emu Music

## **ACTIVITY: DRAMA**

Act out the story from Luke 18:9–14

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?			
Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?			
What characters will we need to play?			
Who is going to play each character?			
What props might we want to use?			
What shall be the title of our play?			

Now that you've prepared, off you go.

## Week 10

### Pre-school age: Luke 18:9–14

#### TEACHING CONCEPT

- God forgives all who trust in Jesus

#### ACTION RHYME

\*To the tune of 'Greensleeves'

Jesus died for sinners like us

Jesus died for sinners like us

So say sorry for your sin and trust in him

Say sorry for your sin and trust in him

#### BIBLE VERSE

'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Luke 18:13b

#### GROUP TIME: GAME

Crocodile, crocodile

How to play:

1. All of the players (except one who is chosen as the crocodile) stand side by side at one side of the room, facing the other side.
2. The crocodile stands in the middle of the room.
3. The players chant, "Crocodile, crocodile, how do we cross the river?"
4. The crocodile then responds by telling players how they must get from one end of the room to the other eg hopping, skipping, crawling etc.
5. The players then try to 'cross the river' without being caught by the crocodile.
6. The first person to get caught answers a story review question and then becomes the next crocodile.

Example story review questions:

- Did the Pharisee think he was good or bad?
- Did the tax collector think he was good or bad?
- Who actually became friends with God in the story?
- So who does God forgive?

## **STORY: US—GOD FORGIVES ALL WHO TRUST IN JESUS**

Think in your head for a moment: who are your friends? What are their names? Don't shout out, put your hands up. [Ask a few of the children who their friends are]. In our story today we are thinking about who can be friends with God. Jesus met some people who didn't think they needed Jesus to die for them. They thought they were really good and they thought they were already friends with God.

Jesus told them a story. One day, a Pharisee and a tax collector went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thought he was really good. Because he thought he was good he thought he was already friends with God. He stood up and prayed: "God, I thank you that I am not a bad man—I don't steal, I don't do bad things, and I'm not like that tax collector over there. I do good things."

But the tax collector stood a long way away because he knew he had done bad things. Because he'd done bad things he knew that he couldn't be friends with God. He knew that God should punish him and he would not even look up. He cried out, "God have mercy on me a sinner." This means "God please forgive me, I have sinned against you."

Because the tax collector asked God to forgive him, he wasn't punished by God. The tax collector went home friends with God. But the Pharisee thought he was good and so he didn't ask God to forgive him, so in the end he was punished by God for his bad heart. The Pharisee thought he was friends with God, but he wasn't.

We've been learning that we all sin against God. We all do bad things and God should punish us all. None of us should be friends with God. But God sent Jesus to die instead of bad people like us. Jesus was punished instead of sinners like us. Jesus died so that we could be friends with God. All we need to do is say sorry to God for our sin. We need to be like the tax collector. We need to realise that we do bad things and ask God to forgive us. Only when we tell God that we are sorry for our sin can we be friends with him.

## **GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

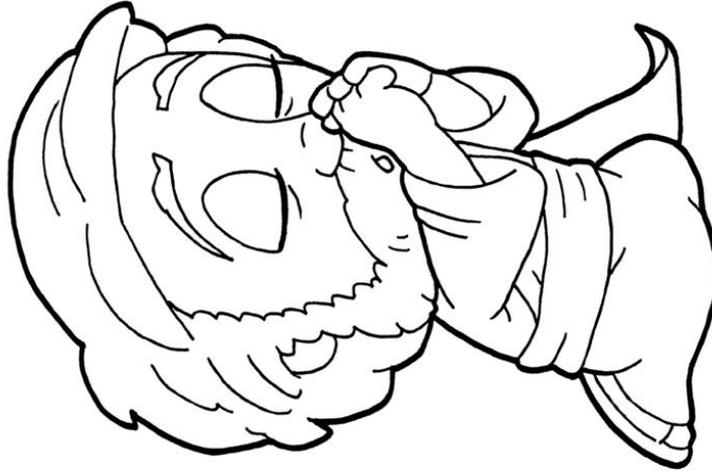
Colour in the picture on the next page. Circle which man went home friends with God.

# God forgives all who trust in Jesus



I'm good. I'm not like him!

The Pharisee thought he was good



Sorry God

The tax collector knew he was bad

Circle the man who went home friends with God

## School age: Romans 4

### **WE ARE JUSTIFIED BY FAITH**

If I told you I can... [Choose something impossible, eg jump on to the roof, run faster than a racehorse, lift your dad up with my little finger] would you believe me? No of course you wouldn't! Those things are impossible and I can't do impossible things. All this term however we have been hearing about someone who has been able to do something we could not do ourselves, something that is impossible for us. We have been hearing the good news about Jesus. The good news that through Jesus, God can do the impossible: he can change us from people who are unrighteous to people who are righteous—people who are right before God.

Today we have a big question: how can we be made righteous? [Put question up] We have heard about the swap—Jesus can take our unrighteousness and give us his righteousness. But how do we benefit from this? How do we get included in the swap?

We heard the first part of the answer to this question in our last session. In our last session we heard about a tax collector and a Pharisee. We learnt that to be included in the swap we need to be like the tax collector. We need to admit we are unrighteous and ask God to have mercy on us. We need to admit that no matter how good we think we are; we are not righteous before God. That is the first part of our answer. Admit we are unrighteous [put up under question]. Today we are going to learn about the second half of the answer.

To help us we are going to look at what Paul wrote in his letter to a church in Rome. When Paul was writing the book of Romans he explained how we can be included in the swap, how we can be made righteous. Paul takes us back to the Old Testament and tells us about a man called Abraham. Abraham was the man that God made lots of big promises to. Paul tells us how Abraham was made righteous before God.

This is what Paul wrote: [Read Romans 4:3b] “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” In other words, Abraham was unrighteous and then God gave him righteousness. Abraham was just like us, he was unrighteous—he was not right before God. But then God changed Abraham from unrighteous to righteous. This change happened when Abraham believed God. Let's hear more of the story of Abraham to help us understand what this means. This is what happened to Abraham.

When Abraham was a really old man, when he was 99 years old and his wife Sarah was pretty old too (she was 90) God made them a promise that they would have a baby. It seemed impossible. Surely Abraham and Sarah were too old to have a baby. How could a woman that old have a baby? It seemed that God's promise of a new baby could not come true. But Abraham trusted God would do what he said. Abraham trusted that God would give him what he could never get for himself. Because Abraham trusted God, the Bible tells us that God made him righteous. Abraham was unrighteous, but God made him righteous.

Paul tells us that Abraham was convinced that God had the power to do what he promised—even though it seemed impossible. Abraham could not do anything about it. God had to do everything for him. Abraham trusted God to give him what he could never get himself. Abraham believed God.

It's the same for us too. We can never make ourselves righteous. We can try as hard as we like but we cannot make ourselves righteous. God must do it for us. God must make us righteous. It is impossible for us to make ourselves righteous. But God can do the impossible, God can make us righteous. When we believe like Abraham did that God can do the impossible then he makes us righteous. When we believe the good news about Jesus, God takes away our unrighteousness and gives us Jesus' righteousness. God did the

impossible by sending Jesus to die on the cross for our sins and did the impossible of raising him from the dead. When we believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that God raised him to life again, God includes us in the swap. God does it all. Like Abraham, we need to trust God to give us what we could never get for ourselves.

Being included in the swap with Jesus is a gift God gives to those who believe the good news. We do not earn it. We do not pay God back. So how are we included in the big swap? How can we be made righteous? First, we admit that we are not righteous and need God's mercy. Second, we believe that God can make us righteous through Jesus' death on the cross.

Let's thank God that he can do the impossible; he can make us righteous if we admit we are unrighteous and believe that Jesus makes us righteous.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- Draw Abraham and Sarah.
- What did Abraham believe God could do?
- Because Abraham believed God would do the impossible did that make him righteous or unrighteous?
- If we believe that Jesus has swapped with us do we become righteous or unrighteous?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you that you are able to do the impossible.
- C We are sorry that we sin against you
- T Thank you that Jesus swapped with us to make us right with God
- S Please help us to believe

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

- [Read Romans 4:18–21] What do we learn about Abraham?
- What is the result of Abraham's faith/belief in verse 22? [Read 4:22]
- Grab a piece of paper, draw a stick man, and write 'Us' at the top of the page. [Read 4:23–25] What do we learn about 'us'? Write these things down next to your stick man.
- Why is faith in Jesus good news?

## ACTIVITY: GAME

### The trust game

1. Assign someone to be the 'faller' and someone to be the 'catcher' (if appropriate, a leader).
2. Give a sign to the faller that says 'unrighteous'. Give a sign to the 'catcher' that says 'righteous Jesus'. To free up their hands for the activity consider making these signs wearable.
3. The 'faller' stands in front of the 'catcher' facing away from the 'catcher'.
4. Ask the faller if they trust that the catcher will catch them.
5. If they are wanting to trust the 'catcher', get them to fall back into the arms of the 'catcher'\*.

\*The 'catcher' must always catch the 'faller'. Please bear in mind and make accommodation for the risks of this activity.

6. For the 'faller' who does fall into the arms of the 'catcher' get them to remove their sign that says 'unrighteous' and to put on another prepared sign that says 'righteous'. Use this as an opportunity to re-enforce the teaching, that those who trust/believe in Jesus are credited with righteousness.
7. If the 'faller' is not wanting to trust the catcher then that is ok\*\*.

\*\*Be careful with how you and the group might treat those who do not fall. A child may not wish to fall because of the perfectly reasonable natural instinct to not fall over. The 'fallers' choice in this activity is not a reflection of their own faith. This activity is an opportunity to re-enforce the teaching of both trusting and not trusting in Jesus.

8. For the 'faller' who does not fall into the arms of the 'catcher' use this also as an opportunity to re-enforce the teaching that for those who do not trust/believe are not credited with righteousness but remain unrighteous.

## SONG OF THE WEEK

'Mighty mighty Saviour'—Sovereign Grace

This song reminds us that no-one can make themselves right with God. It is only through Jesus' death that we can be made righteous.

Try to come up with actions to help you remember the words!

(This song is quite long, so we'd recommend you learn the first verse and chorus and repeat this.)

## ACTIVITY: MEMORY VERSE

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

1. Find the memory verse
  - a. For older children, get them to help each other find the verse in their Bibles.

- b. For the younger children, hide a box in the room (the 'memory verse box') that is labelled 'memory verse', and get the children to find it. Inside this box have the memory verse printed out in easy to read size and font along with any other materials you will need for this activity.)
2. Read the memory verse.
  - a. Read the memory verse yourself being clear and putting in emphasis to highlight the verse's flow and meaning.
3. Discussion
  - a. (What does it say?) What do we learn about belief in this verse?
  - b. (What does it mean?) Here's Bob [have a printout stick man]. We're going to 'put' Bob in this verse. Describe for me what happens to Bob.
  - c. (What does it mean to me?) What does this verse tell us about us?
4. Game
  - a. Print out each word of the verse.
  - b. Shuffle the words and distribute them amongst the children.
  - c. Get them to order themselves in the correct order
  - d. Alternatively get them to stand up and shout out their word as the group makes its way through the verse.

## Week 11

### Pre-school age: Revelation 21:1–22:5

#### TEACHING CONCEPT

- All who trust in Jesus will live forever and ever in a wonderful new world

#### ACTION RHYME

\*To the tune of 'Morning Has Broken'

God will make a wonderful new world  
Where people live forever, no one grows old  
A world with no sadness, sickness or sin  
There'll only be happiness with Jesus our king

#### BIBLE VERSE

Jesus said, "I am making everything new!" Revelation 21:5

#### GAME: HOT POTATO

How to play:

1. Players arrange themselves in a circle and toss a small object (a tennis ball, an orange, or even a real potato will suffice) to each other while music plays.
2. The player who is holding the "hot potato" when the music stops is out.
3. The person that starts next answers a recap question before the game begins again.
4. The game continues until one player is left—that player is the winner.

Alternatives:

- Instead of causing players to go out, if the "hot potato" stops with them they could repeat the concept or answer a recap question.
- Use a water balloon—if the weather is good you could take the game outside and use a water balloon as the hot potato. No music is needed, simply pass the balloon until someone pops it and gets soaked!
- Pass the parcel.

## **STORY: ALL WHO TRUST IN JESUS WILL LIVE FOREVER AND EVER IN A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD**

What is your favourite place in the whole world? Who do you like to be with most of all? Maybe you like sitting on your dad's knee as he reads your favourite stories to you. Maybe you like being with your granddad and grandma, especially if you get to sleep over at their house. Maybe you like going out to the park with your best friends and just playing there together—in a special place, with friends, with family, having fun, and being safe. All these are very good places to be.

But in the Bible God tells us about an extra special place. This extra special place is better than the best place you know. This place is safer than the safest place you've ever been. There is no danger there: nothing scary, nothing bad. This place is full of goodness and love. Best of all, Jesus is there. The place I'm talking about is the New Creation. You've heard many times before that God made everything in the whole world. God made the sun and the moon; the sea and the rivers, the animals and the plants. That's all true. Well in the end, in the future, God will make a whole new world. This new world will be like the world we live in now but much, much better.

[Use a different visual for each of the following paragraphs.] The new creation will be the best place to be because God is there and we will see him with our own eyes. God is real. God is with us all the time. But we can't see him with our eyes. In the new creation we will see God; with our eyes. We will know him. We will love him. He will be in charge and everyone will know it.

The new creation will be the best place to be because Jesus is there and we will meet him. Jesus is alive today. But like with God we can't see him. In the New Creation we will see Jesus; with our eyes. We will know him. We will love him. Being with him will feel even better than sitting on your dad's knee or staying at your granddad's house. Jesus will love you and look after you forever.

The new creation will be the best place to be as nothing sad will be there. There will be no crying in the new creation. God himself will wipe away all our tears. There will be no need to cry. No one will get hurt. No one will get sick. No one will die. The New Creation will be the best place to be as nothing scary will be there. God will get rid of everything bad. There will be no bad dreams in the new creation. No nightmares at all.

The new creation will be the best place to be as everyone who has ever trusted Jesus will be there, together. Your mum and your dad, if they trust in Jesus, will be there. People you've heard about from the Bible will be there too—Abraham, King David, Peter, Paul, Ruth, Esther—all God's people will be in the new creation.

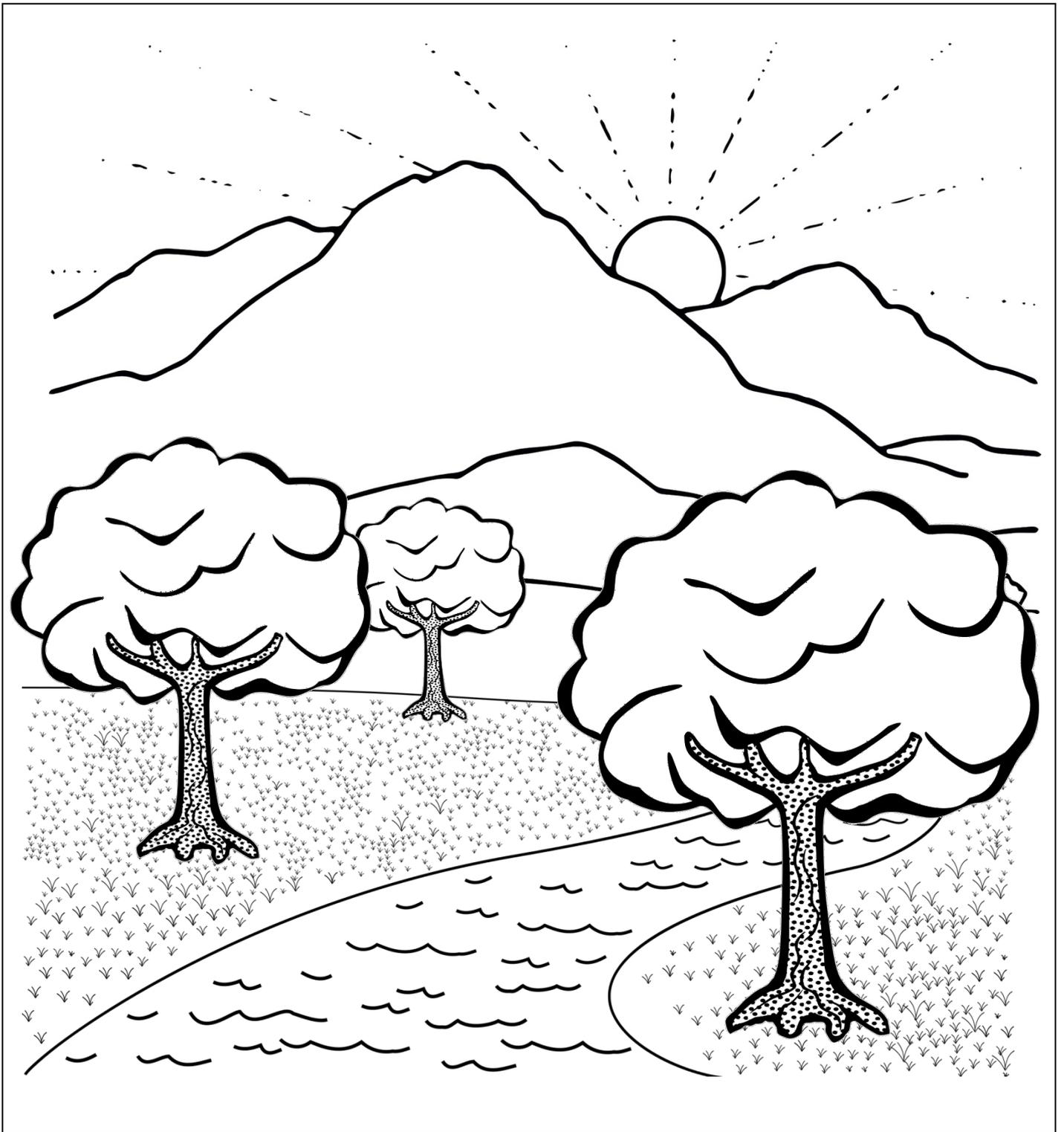
The new creation will be wonderful. It is the best place ever. You can be there too. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will get to live in this new world after they die. If you trust in Jesus then you can look forward to going to the new creation. The new creation will be our home forever and it will be wonderful!

## **CRAFT**

You will need:

- Colouring pens or pencils
- Tissue paper
- Glue
- Stickers

Colour in the river of life picture and add flowers, fruit etc.



## School age: Matthew 25

### **GOD'S JUDGEMENT IS COMING**

Good news! Good news! We have been hearing about God's message of good news. Our question for today is, so what? So what if there is good news from God? Does it matter if I don't listen to it? Does it matter if we ignore God's message of good news?

I've got some messages of good news for you. I want you to listen to them, and then I'll ask you whether it matters if you listen to the message or not. (By the way, these are all made up.)

Good news #1 it is going to be nice and hot and sunny on the first day of the summer holidays.

Good news #2 the ice cream van will be giving out free lollipops in the park tomorrow.

Good news #3 you are drowning in the sea and a man in a rescue helicopter says grab onto the rope.

All of these are good news. Does it matter if we ignore any of them? [Take answers from children and ask them why]

What about God's message of good news? Is God's message like the free lollipops in the park? It's great if you listen but it doesn't really matter if you ignore it. Or is God's message more like the helicopter rescue? If you ignore the message then will you die?

God's judgement is coming. Listen carefully to this story from the gospel of Matthew. This is a story Jesus told about the end of time. [Read Matthew 25:31–33]

Can you imagine the scene? In the future, at the end of time, Jesus the king, leaves his home in heaven and comes down to earth for the second time. This time he comes with all the angels. All the people who have ever lived are standing in front of Jesus. You will be there and so will I, your friends and family will be there. Everyone who has ever lived will be there. The whole crowd will be separated into two groups, like a shepherd might separate sheep from goats.

So what will happen to each group? Let's keep reading what Jesus said to find out.

[Read 25:34] so those on my right, they will be able to enter Jesus' kingdom, they will enter eternal life and live with God forever.

[Read 25:41] Jesus says to the other group that they will go to the eternal fire; other parts of the Bible call it hell. It sounds like a truly terrible and terrifying place to go. None of the good things from the kingdom of God will be there.

[Read 25:46] so, at the end of time, Jesus will separate everyone into two groups. One group will go to eternal life, the other group to hell. This is really serious stuff. What Jesus says comes true, this isn't a made up story.

The people, who go to eternal life, will be the people who have heard the good news about Jesus and believed the good news. The people who go to hell will be the people who ignore God's message of good news.

God's message of good news is serious. If we ignore it then at the end of time we will go away to eternal punishment. If we listen to it, and act on what it says, then we will go to eternal life in the end. At the

beginning we heard about three different messages of good news. God's message of good news is like the rescue helicopter. If you ignore the rescue helicopter and don't grab onto the rope, then you will drown. If you ignore God's message of good news then you will go to eternal punishment.

The most important question for all of us is, 'have I responded to God's message of good news?'. If we ignore God's message of good news, then at the end of time we will go away to eternal punishment. If we have responded to God's good news, then we will go to have eternal life with God.

We know what it means to respond to God's message of good news, we have heard about that from our last two sessions:

We admit our sin and say sorry to God

We believe that Jesus can save us from our sin

Have you responded to God's message of good news? If you haven't then what is holding you back?

If you have, then think about other people you know. Have all of them heard about the good news of Jesus, have they all responded? Everyone will one day stand before Jesus.

Let's thank God that he has told us the good news about Jesus and ask him to help us tell other people about it too.

#### **(A NOTE ON MATTHEW 25:31–46)**

At first glance this passage can be quite confusing. Here are some things that might help clear up the confusion (with help from Don Carson):

Verse 40 'brothers'—this refers to Christian men and women, not to all mankind generally.

Both groups in the story are surprised at what is said (v37 and v44). However, look closely at the text and notice that neither is surprised at where they stand before Jesus. What has surprised them is the reason given for it (v35–36; 42–43).

The surprise of the righteous (v37–39) shows that they don't see their works as earning any merit before God (otherwise they wouldn't be surprised when they're mentioned). These are actions they have done on earth to Christian people without even realising it. They have been so unselfconsciously transformed by the gospel that they are characterised by self-sacrificial service to other Christians. This concern for other Christians is a concern for Christ, who is so closely connected with his people. It's just that they haven't even realised that that is what they were doing—it's just who they are, it's what Christian people do, and as such it testifies to their standing as righteous before God.

In the light of the last day, the challenge to us is whether we have been transformed so deeply by the gospel that, even without thinking about it, we act with compassion towards our brothers and sisters in Christ.

This is probably too nuanced for the children to grasp (!) But the passage puts this nuanced teaching into the context of the separation of the righteous and the unrighteous on the last day. In that sense it is right to focus on the key verses we have done in the story. This also helps us connect the teaching into the wider themes of the gospel that we have covered.)

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

King Jesus talked about two very different places in the story. Everyone will go to one or the other.

1. What were these two places?
  - What did King Jesus say they will be like?
2. What is the good news we've heard about this term that means we don't have to face punishment?
3. Why would it be so crazy to ignore this good news?
4. If you haven't already, why not respond to God's message of good news now?

Here's what we need to do to respond:

- We admit our sin and say sorry to God
- We believe that Jesus can save us from our sin

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray to God in response to the story:

- A We praise you God for the good news of rescue we have heard about this term
- C We're sorry for when we've ignored your amazing message of good news
- T Thank you that anyone who trusts in you will not be punished but be in Jesus' kingdom
- S Please would we be those who have responded to your message of good news and want to tell others about it too

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

King Jesus talked about two very different places in the story. Everyone will go to one or the other.

1. Read 25:34 and 25:46. What were these two places?
  - What did King Jesus say they will be like?
2. What is the good news we've heard about this term that means we don't have to face punishment?
3. Why would it be so crazy to ignore this good news?
4. If you haven't already, why not respond to God's message of good news now?

Here's what we need to do to respond:

- We admit our sin and say sorry to God
- We believe that Jesus can save us from our sin

## **GAME: HOT POTATO**

How to play:

1. Players arrange themselves in a circle and toss a small object (a tennis ball, an orange, or even a real potato will suffice) to each other while music plays.
2. The player who is holding the “hot potato” when the music stops is out.
3. The person that starts next answers a recap question before the game begins again.
4. The game continues until one player is left—that player is the winner.

Alternatives:

- Ask the recap questions at different points during the game eg to the person who goes out, to those who are out to get them back in.
- Use a water balloon—if the weather is good you could take the game outside and use a water balloon as the hot potato. No music is needed, simply pass the balloon until someone pops it and gets soaked!
- Pass the parcel
- ‘Take a step back’—have players start very close together so they only have to hand the ball (“potato”) back and forth to one another. After each time the potato makes it through all the players without being dropped, everyone takes a step backwards so they now need to toss the potato and eventually to throw it to each other. You can play this version with only two players.
- ‘Set a goal’—encourage the children to work together to see how many times the potato goes around the group in 30 seconds. Or see how quickly they can get it around the circle one time. Have a stopwatch handy and challenge them to beat their time, if someone drops the potato, it starts back at the beginning.

Example recap questions:

- What is one of the two places king Jesus said all will go to when he returns?
- What is the other one of the two places king Jesus said all will go to?
- What’s the good news that means we don’t have to face punishment?
- Does it matter if we ignore this good news?
- When should we respond to it?
- How can we respond to this good news?

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

‘Super Saviour’—Colin Buchanan

This song reminds us that the only way we don’t face death and punishment is because of our super saviour, the Lord Jesus.

## ACTIVITY: DRAMA

Act out Matthew 25:31–46

Preparation: using the questions below think through how you are going to produce your drama.

What do we want our audience to learn? How can we tell them?			
Most stories have a beginning, middle, and end, or can be broken down into different scenes. What might these be for our play?			
What characters will we need to play?			
Who is going to play each character?			
What props might we want to use?			
What shall be the title of our play?			

Now that you've prepared, off you go.

## Week 12

### Pre-school age: Revelation 21:1–22:5

#### TEACHING CONCEPT

- All who trust in Jesus will live forever and ever in a wonderful new world

#### ACTION RHYME

\*To the tune of 'Morning Has Broken'

God will make a wonderful new world  
Where people live forever, no one grows old  
A world with no sadness, sickness or sin  
There'll only be happiness with Jesus our king

#### BIBLE VERSE

Jesus said, "I am making everything new!" (Revelation 21:5)

#### GROUP TIME: GAME

'Where am I?'

1. Think of a location that you and your child/children know well (eg their school, the park, the kitchen, their bedroom, the cinema etc.)
2. Ask your child/children to guess the location by asking you yes/no questions about it (like 'Guess Who', but with a place instead of a person).
3. Throw in the new creation at the end to remind them of the Bible story.

## **STORY: ALL WHO TRUST IN JESUS WILL LIVE FOREVER AND EVER IN A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD**

What is your favourite place in the whole world? Who do you like to be with most of all? Maybe you like sitting on your dad's knee as he reads your favourite stories to you. Maybe you like being with your granddad and grandma, especially if you get to sleep over at their house. Maybe you like going out to the park with your best friends and just playing there together. In a special place, with friends, with family, having fun, being safe. All these are very good places to be.

But in the Bible God tells us about an extra special place. This extra special place is better than the best place you know. This place is safer than the safest place you've ever been. There is no danger there: nothing scary, nothing bad. This place is full of goodness and love. Best of all, Jesus is there. The place I'm talking about is the new creation. You've heard many times before that God made everything in the whole world. God made the sun and the moon; the sea and the rivers, the animals and the plants. That's all true. Well in the end, in the future, God will make a whole new world. This new world will be like the world we live in now but much, much better.

[Use a different visual for each of the following paragraphs.] The new creation will be the best place to be because God is there and we will see him with our own eyes. God is real. God is with us all the time. But we can't see him with our eyes. In the new creation we will see God; with our eyes. We will know him. We will love him. He will be in charge and everyone will know it.

The new creation will be the best place to be because Jesus is there and we will meet him. Jesus is alive today. But like with God we can't see him. In the new creation we will see Jesus; with our eyes. We will know him. We will love him. Being with him will feel even better than sitting on your dad's knee or staying at your granddad's house. Jesus will love you and look after you forever.

The new creation will be the best place to be as nothing sad will be there. There will be no crying in the new creation. God himself will wipe away all our tears. There will be no need to cry. No one will get hurt. No one will get sick. No one will die. The new creation will be the best place to be as nothing scary will be there. God will get rid of everything bad. There will be no bad dreams in the new creation. No nightmares at all.

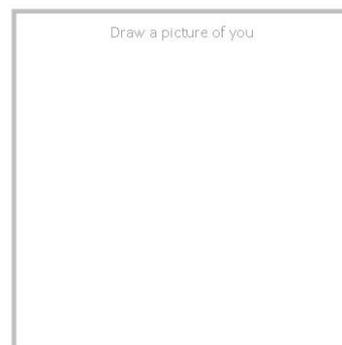
The new creation will be the best place to be as everyone who has ever trusted Jesus will be there, together. Your mum and your dad, if they trust in Jesus, will be there. People you've heard about from the Bible will be there too—Abraham, King David, Peter, Paul, Ruth, Esther—all God's people will be in the new creation.

The new creation will be wonderful. It is the best place ever. You can be there too. Everyone who trusts in Jesus will get to live in this new world after they die. If you trust in Jesus then you can look forward to going to the new creation. The new creation will be our home forever and it will be wonderful!

**GROUP TIME: CRAFT**

Draw yourself in the box and colour it in:

God will make a wonderful  
new world



All who trust in Jesus will live there with him forever

REVELATION 21-22

## School age: Revelation 21–22

### **GOD WILL MAKE A WONDERFUL NEW WORLD (THE NEW CREATION)**

Today we are finishing off the good news from God. We have heard all about the Good News from God. We have heard that God is righteous and that we are unrighteous. We've heard about the big swap that takes place on the cross—Jesus takes our unrighteousness and gives us his righteousness. We have heard that all we need to do is say sorry and believe in Jesus. We have heard so much!

Last time we asked the question 'So what?' So what is the good news really that important? We said yes, it is really important. We said it matters if you ignore the good news of Jesus. You might remember that we thought about drowning in the sea. We got you to imagine a helicopter comes along to rescue you. Someone in the helicopter lets down a rope and tells you to hold on—that would be good news. But if you ignored this good news then it would matter a lot. You would drown. We said that it was a bit like this with the good news from God. If you ignored the good news then you would be sent away from Jesus to God's judgement, the lake of eternal fire. The good news from God is very important indeed!

But the good news is not just about how to avoid God's judgement. It's not just 'believe the good news and then you won't be sent away from God forever'. Instead, anyone who believes the message of good news from God will live forever in a wonderful new world. Today we are looking at the very last book of the Bible. The book is called Revelation. In Revelation, a man called John received a vision from God, this vision showed John what God's wonderful new world will be like.

Let's have a look at what John's wrote about God's wonderful new world. The first thing we hear is that God will be with his people. [Read Revelation 21:3].

Right at the beginning of the Bible Adam and Eve were banished from living with God, they were thrown out of the garden of Eden for disobeying God. Ever since then no one has lived with God. But in John's vision, the first thing we hear about the new world, is that God will be there with his people. God and people will live together. We will be able to see God face-to-face. The best thing about God's wonderful new world is that people will dwell with God. Living with God will make us very happy. But why? What is so great about living with God? Let's read on.

[Read Revelation 21:4]

God is righteous. He always does the right thing. God never does the wrong thing. So living with him will be wonderful. With God there will be no more sadness [visual/action: 'Living with God=no sadness']. Have a think about what makes you sad. Put your hand up and tell me what makes you sad, or why did you last cry? [Take a few answers]. None of these things will be there in God's new world, because God won't let them be there. There won't be any .... [Take answers from the children]. What makes me sad is... [You're your own example] But that won't be in God's new world either. No one will ever cry in sadness, because God will take away all the things that make us cry.

In God's new world, there also won't be any sickness [visual/action: 'Living with God=no sickness']. No one will get hurt or get sick. Think about the last time you or someone in your family got sick. Put your hands up and tell me [take a few answers]. No one will get sick like this in God's wonderful new world; God won't let people get sick. The last time I was sick was... [Give your own example]. But I won't get sick in God's new world. You won't get sick in God's new world. No one will get sick in God's new world.

And, no one will die either [Visual/action: 'Living with God=no death]. Revelation said 'there will be no more death'. Everyone in this world gets old and dies; but not in God's wonderful new world. No one will die in God's wonderful new world. No sadness, no sickness, no death.

And, no sin [Visual/action: 'Living with God=no sin']. In this world, we all do things that God doesn't like. We all turn away from God and do what we want rather than what God wants. Sometimes we do nasty things like snatch something from someone else. Sometimes we say mean things to each other. Sometimes we ignore what our parents ask us to do. Worst of all we don't honour God as we should. We fail to live fully for him. We don't love him with all of our heart. In God's new world, there won't be any sin. We will always do what God wants us to do, we will always do the right thing, and we will never do the wrong thing. We will always honour and love God. Other people will always do the right thing too. We won't be mean and nasty to other people and other people won't be mean and nasty to us. In God's new world there won't be any sin.

God's new world is going to be a wonderful place. People will live with God; there won't be anything bad, no sadness, no sickness, no death, now sin. Instead people will be happy, we will be able to enjoy God's new world, with the one who made it all, God. And what's amazing is that God's new world will go on forever. No one will die in God's new world, so there will be no end to all the happiness. We will be able to enjoy living with God and exploring his new world forever and ever.

So, does the good news of the gospel matter? Yes! At the end of time, Jesus will come back again. Jesus will separate everyone who has ever lived into two groups. One group who ignored the good news from God—they are sent away from Jesus to God's judgement, the lake of eternal fire. The other group, who listened to the good news from God, Jesus will welcome them into God's wonderful new world.

All of us can be there in God's wonderful new world, I can be there, you can be there, your mums and dads can be there, and your friends at school can be there. All we need to do is to believe the good news from God. We need to admit that we are unrighteous rebels who deserve God's punishment. We need to trust that Jesus died in the place of unrighteous people like us. If we do this, then God won't punish us. Instead we will be given a place in God's wonderful new world. All of us, you, me, your mums and dads, your friends at school. We can all be there if we say sorry and trust in Jesus.

### **ACTS PRAYER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 1–3)**

Think tank: questions to keep us thinking

- What is the new creation like? (If you like, draw some things you're looking forward to about it.)
- What things in our world now will no longer exist in the new creation? (No sadness, sickness, death, or sin.)
- Why does it matter if we listen to the good news of the gospel or not?
- How can we tell the good news of the gospel to friends and family around us?

### **ACTS prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication)**

Here's an example of the kinds of things we could pray in response to the story:

- A We praise you that you are going to create a whole new perfect world with no sadness, sickness, death, or sin.
- C We are sorry for our sin and when we don't live for you.
- T Thank you that we can go to the new creation because we trust in Jesus.
- S Please help us to tell others about this wonderful news.

### **DIGGING DEEPER (DISCUSSION FOR YEARS 4–6)**

- Draw a circle on half of a piece of paper.
  - In the circle write what will be in the new creation.
  - Outside the circle write what won't be in the new creation.
- Read Revelation 21:1–4. List some differences between our world now and the new creation.
- What are you most looking forward to about the new creation? Why?
- Why can we go to the new creation?

Spend some time in prayer thanking God for sending Jesus to die for unrighteous sinners like us so that we can be with him forever in the new creation.

### **ACTIVITY: MEMORY VERSE**

Memory verse: Romans 1:16

1. Find the memory verse
  - a. For older children, get them to help each other find the verse in their Bibles.
  - b. For the younger children, hide a box in the room (the 'memory verse box') that is labelled 'memory verse', and get the children to find it. Inside this box have the memory verse printed out in easy to read size and font along with any other materials you will need for this activity.)
2. Read the memory verse.
  - a. Read it out loud all together.
  - b. Read it around in a circle with one person taking one word at a time.
3. Discussion
  - a. We often feel ashamed about being a Christian/the gospel. Why is Paul not ashamed?
  - b. How do you feel about the gospel?
  - c. From our memory verse what can we thank God for?
4. Game
  - a. Come up with a chant/rhyme for the verse.
  - b. Put some actions to this.
  - c. Repeat the verse over and over again.

## **SONG OF THE WEEK**

'No more tears'—Emu Music

### **ACTIVITY: CRAFT**

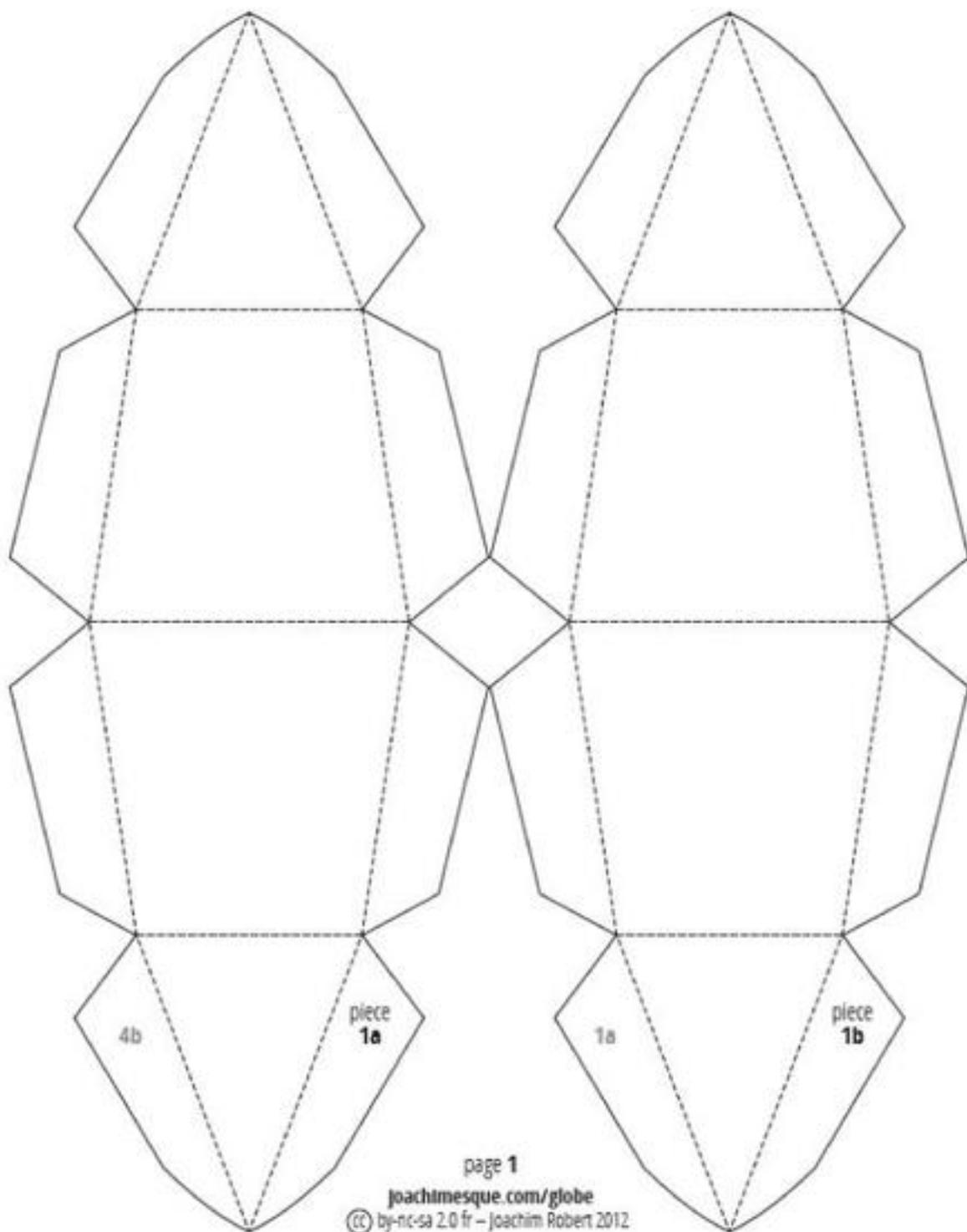
Paper globe

You will need:

- A printed copy of a globe template (provided below)
- Scissors
- Colouring pencils/crayons
- Pen/pencil
- Glue stick

How to make:

1. Cut out the template.
2. Decorate the globe as God's new world. Write 'no sadness', 'no sickness', 'no death', and 'no sin' on the exterior faces. Decorate with colours.
3. Carefully glue the shape together. Remember to finish decorating before you do so.



page 1

[joachimesque.com/globe](http://joachimesque.com/globe)

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Inspiré de « Spherical Globe - earth's axis, 23.4 degrees » — [www.geo-grafia.jp](http://www.geo-grafia.jp)  
leurs globes ne sont pas chers, ils ont des matières et couleurs différentes  
et ils sont de très bonne qualité, n'hésitez pas à leur en commander.

## Worksheets

The following worksheets can be used alongside the school age material or separately. They are designed to be done at home as an engaging reminder of the teaching the children have heard and could be done together with parents. We hope that these sheets not only cement Biblical truths but also encourage an Ephesians 4:15 culture in the home.

For printing purposes the page numbers of the worksheets are as follows:

Week 1	p106 and 107
Week 2	p108 and 109
Week 3	p110 and 111
Week 4	p112 and 113
Week 5	p114 and 115
Week 6	p116 and 117
Week 7	p118 and 119
Week 8	p120 and 121
Week 9	p122 and 123
Week 10	p124 and 125
Week 11	p126 and 127
Week 12	p128 and 129

The Gospel

Because God made us, he owns us

? Get thinking

Here are some things people have made: a painting, bread, a chair. Who owns each thing?

† Get reading

Read Genesis 1:1 & 2:8. Draw all the things God has made. \*Use half of the back of this sheet.

💭 Think tank

Who owns all these things? (\*Circle the correct answer.)

- |        |            |
|--------|------------|
| Mummy  | My teacher |
| God    | The queen  |
| No-one | Batman     |

☀️ Activity

Decipher the code. Each number is a letter of the alphabet. (1=a, 2=b, 3=c)

— — —	— — — —	— —
7 15 4	13 1 4 5	13 5

♥️ Apply

Knowing God has made you and owns you, draw a face to show how you feel.

💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray:

We praise you for making all things!

The Gospel

Because God made us, he owns us

? Get thinking

Can you think of an item in your house that's yours because you've made it?

† Get reading

Glance over Genesis chapter 1. Draw some of the things God has made. \*Use one half of the back of this sheet.

Think tank

Who owns all those things?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why does God own all of creation?

\_\_\_\_\_

Activity

Crossword

A	L	O	T	C	N	R	L	S	M	E	E	S	N
I	L	A	T	R	T	E	N	N	R	A	E	G	A
A	B	N	R	N	C	L	L	O	A	A	D	E	E
O	N	G	E	T	M	G	E	N	E	E	T	A	D
A	I	E	E	E	N	E	N	S	N	G	F	S	G
A	A	A	R	S	T	D	A	O	G	O	N	A	O
E	N	P	L	A	N	T	S	A	L	D	L	G	S
R	I	B	N	E	A	L	R	N	G	E	E	E	P
O	M	A	E	R	C	D	P	L	N	S	B	N	E
A	A	O	O	G	E	D	S	G	S	A	L	E	L
N	L	A	W	N	N	E	N	N	L	D	R	S	T
I	S	N	E	N	E	P	N	N	D	O	P	I	T
N	A	F	N	L	I	F	E	L	A	E	G	S	N
O	S	C	R	E	A	T	I	O	N	N	A	G	C

GOSPEL  
STARS  
OWN  
ANIMALS  
GENESIS  
TREE  
BELONG  
CREATION  
LIFE  
GOD  
PLANTS  
ADAM  
GARDEN

♥ Apply

Knowing God has made you and owns you, draw a face to show how you feel. \*Use the other half of the back of this sheet.

Knowing that God owns us, how should we treat Him?

Pray

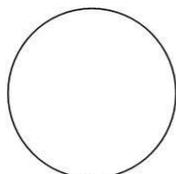
What can we praise God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

# Because God is righteous, he cannot ignore wrongdoing

## ? Get thinking

Draw a face showing how you feel when you see someone cheat in a game.



## † Get reading

Read Psalm 11:7. What does it mean that God is righteous?

## 💡 Think tank

Are these true or false?  
*Put a tick or cross*

- God is always fair
- God likes unfairness
- God sometimes does the wrong thing
- Because God is righteous he can't ignore wrongdoing

## ☀️ Activity

Fill in the blanks

God is always \_\_\_\_\_ . He always does the \_\_\_\_\_ thing. He never does the \_\_\_\_\_ thing.

*Wrong   Righteous   Right*

## ♥️ Apply

Why is it a good thing that God is righteous when we see bad things in the world?

## 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray:

We praise you because you are righteous – you always act in the right way!

# Because God is righteous, he cannot ignore wrongdoing

## ? Get thinking

What it would be like if God didn't punish evil?

## † Get reading

Read Psalm 11:7. What is God like? What does this mean?

## 💭 Think tank

From the story earlier, how did God show that he is righteous?

## ☀️ Activity

Fill in the blanks

Example: Being fair is the right thing to do.

So... God is always fair, he is never unfair. He loves fairness and he hates unfairness.

Now you have a go:

Telling the truth is the right thing to do.

So... God always \_\_\_\_\_. He never \_\_\_\_\_. He loves \_\_\_\_\_ and he hates \_\_\_\_\_.

## ♥️ Apply

Why is it a good thing that God is righteous? How would you feel if God didn't care about wrongdoing?

## 💬 Pray

What can we praise God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

# We are all rebels against God

## ? Get thinking

Imagine you are the King or Queen of England. How would you expect people to behave towards you?



## + Get reading

Read Genesis 3:1-6. What did Adam and Eve do wrong in the garden?

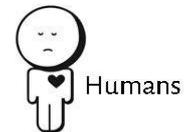
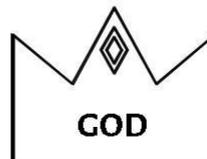
## 💭 Think tank

Find a felt-tip pen and scribble out the sentences that aren't true.

- We are in charge of our lives
- God is in charge of our lives
- We often disobey God
- We can do whatever we want to

## ☀️ Activity

Draw lines to match these descriptions to the correct person



- Perfect, sinful, rebel, righteous,
- in charge, not in charge

## ♥️ Apply

Think of some examples of how we act like we're in charge instead of God.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray:

Sorry God that we live like we are in charge of our lives instead of you.

**? Get thinking**

Imagine you are the King or Queen of England. How would you expect people to behave towards you?



**† Get reading**

Read Genesis 3:1-6. What did Adam and Eve do wrong in the garden?

How did God respond to what they did?



**Think tank**

Why was it so wrong for Adam and Eve to eat the fruit in the garden?

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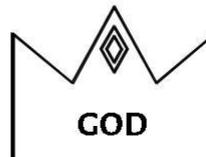
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**Activity**

List the opposite descriptions of what us humans are like



God is:  
Perfect  
Righteous  
In charge



Humans are:

---

---

---



**Apply**

How are we like Adam and Eve in Genesis 3?

Do we find it easy or hard to believe we deserve God's punishment for our sin?



**Pray**

What can we say sorry to God for?

# We are all unrighteous before God

## ? Get thinking

God is righteous. He made us and he owns us. How do you think that makes him feel about our sin?



## † Get reading

Read Romans 3:10. How many people does the bible say are righteous?

## 💡 Think tank

Circle which person is righteous

Someone who ...

...never tells the truth

...sometimes tells the truth

...usually tells the truth

...always tells the truth

Does the bible say there is anyone like that?

## ☀️ Activity

Find a map of the world or a globe. Look at all the different countries in the world. Close your eyes and pick a country. What does Romans 3 say would be true of all the people you could meet there? Would you find anyone who is completely righteous?



## ♥️ Apply

Can you think of some of the ways you've not lived God's way this week?

## 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray:

Sorry God that we don't always do the right thing all the time.

# We are all unrighteous before God

## ? Get thinking

God is righteous. He made us and he owns us. How do you think that makes him feel about our sin?



## † Get reading

Read Romans 3:10. Who in the world does the bible say is righteous?

## 💡 Think tank

Fill in the right answer

How often would you have to do what is right to be righteous?

Never                      Sometimes

Usually                      \_\_\_\_\_

Does the bible say there is anyone like that?

## ☀️ Activity

Find a map of the world or a globe. Look at all the different countries in the world. Close your eyes and pick a country. What does Romans 3 say would be true of all the people you could meet there? Would you find anyone who is completely righteous?



## ♥️ Apply

Can you think of some of the ways you've not lived God's way this week?

## 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray:

Sorry God that we don't always do the right thing all the time.

## The Gospel

# Week 5: Worksheet years 1-3

## Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life, for us

### ? Get thinking

How is Jesus unlike any other human being who has ever lived?



### + Get reading

Read 1 John 2:1. What does it say about us? What does it say about Jesus?

### 💭 Think tank

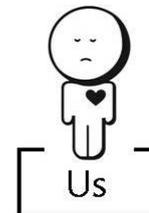
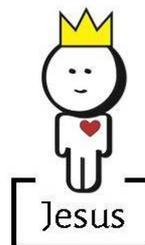
What does being 'perfectly righteous' mean? Circle the correct answer.

1. Doing most things right and getting a few things wrong.
2. Doing everything right and always pleasing God.
3. Doing everything wrong.

### ☀️ Activity

Match the words and the people:

- \*Righteous
- \*Perfect
- \*Sinful
- \*Always pleases God
- \*Unrighteous
- \*Not always pleasing to God



### ♥️ Apply

- How are you and Jesus different?
- What about Jesus makes you go 'WOW'?

### 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you could pray:

We praise you God that your Son is perfectly righteous.

# Jesus lived a perfectly righteous life, for us

## ? Get thinking

What does being 'perfectly righteous' mean?

## † Get reading

Read 1 John 2:1 . What does it say about us? What does it say about Jesus?

## 💭 Think tank

When did Jesus obey God perfectly?



How is Jesus different to our friends, family, and everyone we know?



## ☀️ Activity

Rearrange these letters to form words that make sense!

SUSEJ DIVEL A YELTFCREP

GEIRTSYOU ELFI, ROFSU!

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## ♥️ Apply

- How are you and Jesus different?
- What about Jesus makes you go 'WOW'?

## 💬 Pray

How can we thank God for who Jesus is?

**The Gospel**

# Jesus died a sinners death, for us

## ? Get thinking

Have you ever swapped something with someone else?

## + Get reading

Read Luke 23:39-43

Imagine you're there listening in to this conversation.

## Think tank

How did the two different criminals respond to Jesus?

Criminal 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Criminal 2: \_\_\_\_\_

What does Jesus tell the second criminal will happen 'today'?

## Activity

Spot and circle the differences:

Unrighteous



criminal  
Punished

Righteous



Jesus

Righteous



criminal  
Paradise

Unrighteous



Jesus  
Punished

## ♥ Apply

From what you've looked at, what amazes you about Jesus?

## Pray

We praise you because you are so kind and loving to send Jesus to die for unrighteous people like us.

The Gospel

# Jesus died a sinners death, for us

## ? Get thinking

Can you think of a time when you've done something naughty but someone else has taken the blame for it?

## † Get reading

Read Luke 23:39-43

Imagine you're there listening to this conversation.

## 💭 Think tank

How did the two different criminals respond to Jesus?

What does Jesus tell the second criminal will happen 'today'?

How is this possible for a criminal who deserves to die?

## ☀️ Activity

1. Circle which men **deserved** to be punished for sin.
2. Cross out the men who **were** punished for sin.



Vs. 39  
criminal



Jesus



Vs. 40-42  
criminal

## ♥️ Apply

Everyone in the world is like one of the criminals. Which of the two criminals are you like and why?

## 💬 Pray

Write a prayer of thanks:

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**The Gospel**

# Jesus was raised to life again, for us

## **Get thinking**

Who is the most important person you have ever met?

## **Get reading**

Read Philippians 2:9-11. See Jesus journey down and then up again.

## **Think tank**

Which stage of Jesus' life do these sentences describe?

\_\_\_\_: Jesus came to earth as a human being

\_\_\_\_: Jesus died for our sins

\_\_\_\_: God raised Jesus to life and made him King over everything

**Cross   Cradle   Crown**

## **Activity**

Describe Jesus using these four letters:

**K**

**I**

**N**

**G**

## **Apply**

Why is it good that Jesus is king over us?

## **Pray**

Thank you God for raising Jesus from the dead! Thank you God for making him King over everything!

The Gospel

# Jesus was raised to life again, for us

## ? Get thinking

What difference would it have made if Jesus had remained dead in the tomb?

## † Get reading

Read Philippians 2:5-11

Describe in 3 sentences the 'down-and-up' journey that Jesus took (Hint: Cra-

## 💭 Think tank

What does it mean...

...that Jesus' name is above every other name?

...that every knee should bow to Jesus?

...that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord?

## ☀️ Activity

Correct the mistakes in the paragraph below:

Jesus lived an almost perfect life. He died on a cross because he was guilty of a crime. He is still dead now. He's not very significant, He is just remembered as a good man.

## ♥️ Apply

Why is it good that Jesus is king over us?

How should we respond to King Jesus, and why?

## 💬 Pray

What can we thank God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

What can we praise God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

# The loving swap

## ? Get thinking

Can you remember from what we've seen so far why our sin is such a big problem to solve?

## † Get reading

Read Romans 5:6-8. What kind of people does it say Jesus died for?

## 💭 Think tank

These are two ways people try to solve the problem of sin:

The Ostrich Solution: Some people stick their head in the sand and ignore the problem of sin.



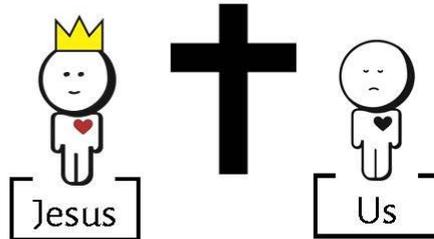
The Wallet Solution: Some people think sin is a fine you can pay. They think that if they do enough good things then they won't be in trouble with God anymore.

Why don't these two things work to solve the problem of our sin?

## ☀️ Activity

God shows his love for us at the cross.

Circle in blue who deserves to die.  
Circle in red who died instead.



How does this show God loves us?

## ♥️ Apply

Write down how this 'big swap' makes you feel about God:

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## 💬 Pray

We praise you God for your son Jesus who died instead of us so that we can be friends with you. Amen

# The loving swap

## ? Get thinking

Can you remember from what we've seen so far why our sin is such a big problem to solve?

## † Get reading

Read Romans 5:6-8. What kind of people does it say Jesus died for?

## 💭 Think tank

These are two ways people try to solve the problem of sin:

The Ostrich Solution: Some people stick their head in the sand and ignore the problem of sin.



The Wallet Solution: Some people think sin is a fine you can pay. They think that if they do enough good things then they won't be in trouble with God anymore.

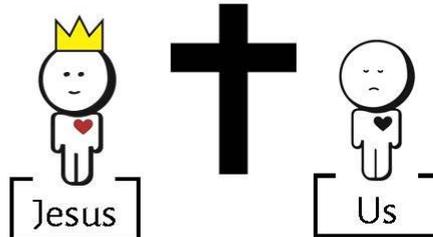
Can you think of why we might try these solutions? Why don't they work in the end?

## ☀️ Activity

God shows his love for us at the cross.

Circle in blue who deserves to die.

Circle in red who died instead.



How does this show God loves us?

## ♥️ Apply

Write down how this 'big swap' makes you feel about God:

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## 💬 Pray

We praise you God for your son Jesus who died instead of us so that we can be friends with you. Amen

# Repentance: we need God's mercy

## ? Get thinking

Can you picture someone who thinks they never need any help.

## + Get reading

Read Luke 18:9-14. Try and imagine how the two characters felt as they said those words.

## Think tank

Who needs God's mercy? *Circle yes/no.*

Our parents (yes/no)

Ourselves (yes/no)

The postman (yes/no)

The Prime Minister (yes/no)

Our friends (yes/no)

The Queen (yes/no)

## Activity

Act out the passage, playing the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in turn. (What were they saying to God? Why did they pray those prayers?)



## Apply

Everyone is unrighteous and needs God's mercy. Are you like the Pharisee or are you like the tax collector?

## Pray

Here's a prayer you could pray:  
God, I know that I have sinned against you, please have mercy on me.

**The Gospel**

# Repentance: we need God's mercy

## ? Get thinking

Can you picture someone who thinks they never need any help.

## † Get reading

Read Luke 18:9-14. On the back of this sheet write down the differences between the Pharisee and the tax collector.

## 💭 Think tank

- Why do we all need to ask for mercy?
- Why do we all need Jesus?
- What happens when we ask for mercy? (18:14)

## ☀️ Activity

Decode this jumbled Bible verse:

'FOR HIMSELF WHO WILL BE  
HUMBLED EXALTS EVERYONE, BUT HIM-  
SELF WILL BE EXALTED THE ONE WHO  
HUMBLES.'

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## ♥️ Apply

Everyone is unrighteous and needs God's mercy. Are you like the Pharisee or are you like the tax collector?

## 💬 Pray

What can we ask God for?

What can we thank God for?

The Gospel

We are justified by faith

? Get thinking

What would be impossible for you to do?  
Draw it or write it down.

\_\_\_\_\_

+ Get reading

Read Romans 4:3b. Did you spot what God credited to (gave to) Abraham?

This word means being right with God.

Think tank

Sally and Jamie are having a conversation at home:

Sally: "We can make ourselves righteous if we try hard."

Jamie: "We need God to give us righteousness."

Who's is right? Why?

Activity

Fill in the blanks using these words:

righteous died sins believe

When we \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus  
\_\_\_\_\_ on the cross for  
our \_\_\_\_\_, God makes  
us \_\_\_\_\_.

Apply

God has does the impossible! If we believe him, he gives us righteousness.

- How important is it that you are right with God?
- Do you believe?



Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray...

Please God make me righteous through Jesus' death.

# We are justified by faith

## ? Get thinking

What would be impossible for you to do?  
Why is it impossible to make yourself righteous?

## † Get reading

Read Romans 4:3-5. Can you spot what God credited to (gave to) Abraham?

## 💭 Think tank

What do we learn about Abraham in verse 3?



What do we learn about the person in verse 5?



## ☀️ Activity

Fill in the blanks using these words:

*righteous died sins believe*

When we \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus  
\_\_\_\_\_ on the cross for  
our \_\_\_\_\_, God makes  
us \_\_\_\_\_.

## ♥️ Apply

God has does the impossible! If we believe him, he gives us righteousness.

- How important is it that you are right with God?
- Do you believe?

## 💬 Pray

What can you ask God for?

# God's judgement is coming

## ? Get thinking

Think of some really good news you've heard recently. Why was it so good?

## † Get reading

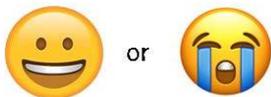
Read Matthew 25:46. What are the two places Jesus says everyone will go to?

## 💭 Think tank

King Jesus describes hell as a horrible place away from God.

Think of all the amazing things we've learnt about God this term.

How would it feel to be away from him forever?



## ☀️ Activity



It's scary to think about hell, but King Jesus is warning us so we respond to his good news. Circle the right response:

Hear and believe

Ignore or refuse

## ♥️ Apply

Have you responded to King Jesus' offer of rescue?

Why would it be crazy to ignore it?

## 💬 Pray

Here's a prayer you can pray...

Please God would we be those who have responded to your message of good news. Amen

# God's judgement is coming

## ? Get thinking

Think of some really good news you've heard recently.  
Would it have mattered if you ignored it?

## † Get reading

Read Matthew 25:46. What are the two places Jesus says everyone will go to?

## 💭 Think tank

King Jesus describes hell as a horrible place away from God.  
Think of all the amazing things we've learnt about God this term.  
Why would it be so bad to be away from him forever? 😭

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## ☀️ Activity



It's scary to think about hell, but King Jesus is warning us so we respond to his good news. Circle the right response



**GOOD NEWS!**

Hear and believe

Ignore or refuse

## ♥️ Apply

Have you responded to King Jesus' offer of rescue?  
Why would it be crazy to ignore it?

## 💬 Pray

What could you talk to God about?

Pray about this now.

# God will make a wonderful new world (the new creation)

## ? Get thinking

Can you think of the best place you've ever been?

\_\_\_\_\_

## † Get reading

Read Revelation 21:1-4. Try to picture what's going on

## Think tank

Why is the new creation good news?

\_\_\_\_\_



## Activity

Answer the questions by scribbling out the pictures:

What won't be in the new creation?



What will be in the new creation?



## ♥ Apply

The new creation will be a real place!  
What are you looking forward to?

\_\_\_\_\_

## Pray

Here's a prayer you could pray:

Thank you that I can live with you forever in the perfect new creation because Jesus has died for unrighteous sinners like me.

# God will make a wonderful new world (the new creation)

## ? Get thinking

Can you think of the best place you've ever been?

\_\_\_\_\_

## † Get reading

Read Revelation 21:1-4. If you could pick what you think are the three most important events. What would they be?

## 💭 Think tank

Why is the new creation good news?



\_\_\_\_\_

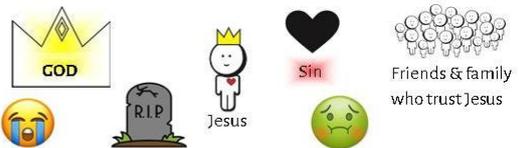
How does Jesus' death make it possible for unrighteous sinners like us to live with him forever?

\_\_\_\_\_

## ☀️ Activity

Answer the questions by scribbling out the pictures:

What won't be in the new creation?



What will be in the new creation?



## ♥️ Apply

The new creation will be a real place! What are you looking forward to?

\_\_\_\_\_

We've learned a lot about Jesus in the gospel. What do you love about him?

## 💬 Pray

What can we praise God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

What can we thank God for?

\_\_\_\_\_

## How to...

### ...lead a preschool session

A typical preschool Sunday school session is divided up into circle times (altogether) and group times (in two groups). The overall structure is this:

1. Circle time 1
2. Group time (games)
3. Circle time 2
4. Group time (craft/discussion)

Below is a guide to each circle time and group time and some top tips.

Each circle time follows a specific structure—this helps the children because they know what is coming, and what is expected of them at each point. It is worth sticking very closely to the structure, and even the same wording each week.

What will you need for the session?

- A sheet with the concept written on, with an appropriate picture.
- A box—the 'Bible box'
- A Bible
- Pre-prepared craft
- Any visual aids you require for the story
- Print outs of the Sunday school rules

#### **CIRCLE TIME 1**

1. Gathering song:  
'Let's gather together to hear from God  
Let's gather together to hear from God  
Come gather here with me.'
2. Welcome and pray
3. Remind children of the Sunday school rules
  - Sit properly
  - Don't shout out
  - Obey your teacher straight away
4. Bible box:  
Sing:  
'What are we going to learn today?'

What are we going to learn today?  
Let's find out from the Bible box,  
Let's find out from the Bible box'

Then ask a child to get the concept sheet out of the Bible box.

5. Concept explanation:

Explain the concept for the day and help the children to understand what it means. Think about which words they will not understand, maybe how this relates to what they learnt last week, how you can best explain this concept with illustrations or questions or pictures or examples.

6. Action rhyme:

Teach the actions to the children while they are seated and practice the actions with them. Then stand and go all the way through the action rhyme. Consider singing it with different voices.

7. The Bible:

The teacher introduces the chant with a something like, "now children, where do I get all this from? How do we know that God is.....? Did I just make it up out of my head? ["No!" shout the children] "Where do I get it all from then?" ["The Bible!" shout the children]. The teacher then moves straight into the Bible chant:

"The Bible, the Bible,  
How we love the Bible,  
It's God's word,  
Yay!"

Ask a child to open the Bible box (the Bible should be hidden in the Bible box at this point)  
Read the Bible verse for the day, briefly explain any long words and link it to the concept.

8. Pray

At this point, ask the children to do the appropriate action for each prayer as you pray:

- Adoration: "let's point our fingers upwards and tell God how great he is. Dear God we praise you because you are... .. Amen."
- Confession: "let's point to ourselves and say sorry to God for our sin. Dear God we confess to you that ... .. Amen."
- Thanksgiving: "let's hold our hands out and say thank you to God. Dear God we thank you for ... .. Amen."
- Supplication: "let's finish our prayers by asking God to do great things. Put your hands together. Dear God we ask you to ... .. Amen."

9. Closing song:

'We've gathered together to hear from God,  
We've gathered together to hear from God,  
And now it's time to play!'

### **GROUP TIME (GAME TIME)**

Games are a light and fun way to re-enforce the teaching concept. Practice the concept together until all the children are confident saying it from memory, and then play a very basic game. Within this game think about how you can review what has been taught, eg repeating the concept, through questions, or possibly through the theme of the game.

### **CIRCLE TIME 2**

1. Gathering song:

'Let's gather together to hear from God  
Let's gather together to hear from God  
Come gather here with me.'

2. Tell story with pictures.

3. Closing song:

'We've gathered together to hear from God,  
We've gathered together to hear from God,  
And now it's time for craft!

### **GROUP TIME (CRAFT / DISCUSSION TIME)**

Craft should be provided

Craft time is also the 'small group discussion time'—make sure leaders are well spread among the children and are talking to the children about the story, asking them questions about what they have heard, what can they remember, what does it mean for them.

## **SOME HELPFUL TIPS**

### 1. Enforce the ‘Don’t shout out! Put your hand up’ rule

Remind the children of this before you ask a question, or after someone has shouted out. Always ask a child who has their hand up to answer. This will really help your lessons, as over time, the children will learn not to shout out, and you won’t have a lesson which is out of control and noisy. This means the children will learn the things we are teaching them much better.

### 2. Try not to use your notes

This sounds crazy! After all, what are notes for?! But you hold the children’s attention much better if you are speaking to them and using eye-contact, instead of reading notes.

It can be helpful to write out exactly what you want to say, so it’s in your head, and then maybe practise saying it with these notes and then without. Doing this on Sunday morning can be helpful so it’s fresh in your mind. You may forget a few things, and sometimes not use exactly the right words, but the children engage much more if you do it this way and you will soon get used to it.

### 3. Speak slowly and clearly

This is also really important for the children’s concentration. If they have to work hard to catch what you are saying, they will stop trying very quickly. It can be particularly hard when there is a lot of background noise, so make sure the children in the back row can hear you.

### 4. Speak as though you are in charge—you are!

If you want the children to obey what you say, you must act and speak as though you are in charge. If you want a child to do something, speak as though you mean it! Give a command, not a question, and expect to be obeyed. If the child does not obey you first time—remind them of the rule of first time obedience to Sunday school teachers, with a straight face and firm voice.

## ...prepare a Bible talk

This guide is applicable to preparing both pre-school and school age Bible stories. It is a basic skeleton of what you might do to prepare a Bible talk.

<b>1. Pray</b>	Ask the Lord to help you grow personally and prepare to teach others.
<b>2. Read the passage</b>	Do this at least three times, on the third time note down the big themes / ideas in the passage.
<b>3. Study the passage</b>	Ask 'what', 'why', and 'so what' questions of the passage. Aim to understand the author's purpose. Helpful books on how to study the Bible are the 'Dig Deeper' series published by IVP.
<b>4. Read the 'example story/talk'</b>	Think about how the talk/story is pieced together, the language it uses, how it handles and explains the passage, and the line of application it's taken. Consider why these things are so. Analysing other talks is a useful training tool.
<b>5. Apply and pray</b>	Apply this passage to yourself and pray it in.
<b>6. Modify the example story/talk as necessary</b>	The example talk/story is meant to be just that, an example, avoid reading it word for word to the children as it won't reflect you and your own character as you teach. You could: Put it in your own words or write the story out in note form Make it simpler/harder depending on the age group Change illustrations if desired Work out what you will pray for at the end of the story
<b>7. Gather / print visuals</b>	Children need visual help to keep their concentration and to assist their memory afterward. This can be drawings, printed pictures, words/very short phrases, physical items etc.
<b>8. Pray</b>	Ask the Lord to help you as you practice the story.
<b>9. Practice the story</b>	Give the whole talk, thinking about how you will juggle holding a Bible, your notes, the visuals etc. If you use pictures and words think carefully about how you will arrange these when stuck up and in what order they need to be available to you.  Time yourself; do you need to be quicker / cut material out?
<b>10. Pray</b>	Ask the Lord to help the children and any present to have ears to hear what God has to say.
<b>11. Review</b>	After the session ask for/invite feedback on your story/talk. Feedback is a constructive way to be trained in teaching children, both to you receiving the feedback and any others observing. Expect feedback, endure feedback, evaluate feedback, and enact upon feedback.

## ...lead an ACTS discussion and prayer group (5–8s)

ACTS stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. The aim of this discussion time is to help the children to apply the teaching to themselves, and to pray. The ACTS outline helps the children to learn to pray different kinds of prayers.

### PRE-SESSION PREPARATION

1. Write an ACTS prayer for yourself after having read the story.

Here are some pointers:

- Adoration

People sometimes struggle with the A of ACTS prayer and are unsure how to distinguish it from thanksgiving. Adoration focuses on God and his character; it is about who God is in himself. The easiest way to think about it is to finish the phrase 'God is \_\_\_\_\_.' Examples of God's character include: God is loving, kind, holy, just, patient, almighty, wise, sovereign. To turn that into an Adoration prayer, try starting: 'We praise you, you are so \_\_\_\_\_'

As the whole Bible reveals to us who God is then every passage will have something to say about him. But it won't necessarily be on the surface; sometimes it will require a bit of thought. This thinking is a good thing we want to encourage in the children.

- Confession

Think of something from the story that shows us sin that we can relate to our own life and say sorry to God for. Confession is telling God what we are like when we don't live as we should.

- Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving includes what God does for his world and his people.

- Supplication

Make sure requests are about the Bible story. One thing to bear in mind is that it is easy to miss out grace or become very man-centered when thinking about this category. If we always start this prayer with, 'Lord, we ask you to help us...' over time it gives the impression that we just need God's helping hand to do something we can just about do ourselves. Think about including phrases like, 'Lord, we ask you to change us so that...', 'Lord we ask you to work inside our heart so that...'

Think about the kinds of answers that are legitimate under each heading. Remember though that the children will come up with good answers that you have not thought of in advance.

Think about how you might follow up an answer a child gives.

## 2. Write questions to guide the children

The children in your group will find it difficult to come up with a prayer for each heading themselves. You will get to know your group over time and work out how much direction they need. At the start, make sure you have prepared a few questions to lead them to an answer under each heading.

Worked example:

Imagine you have just heard the story of the prodigal son, in which God is shown to be a kind Father who incredibly welcomes home sinners who repent. We are sinners who can turn back to our loving father and be assured of being welcomed home.

- Adoration:

What was the father like in the story? Who is the father like? So what is God like? What does God do when we say sorry? Let's turn that into an adoration prayer: 'we praise you because you are so...'

- Confession:

Did the younger son need to repent? Did the older son need to repent? What did the teacher say about us, do we need to repent? That's right, none of us love God with all our heart. But if we repent, God welcomes us home. Shall we do that now?

- Thanksgiving:

We've just said sorry to God. What will God do? That's right, he welcomes us back! Isn't that kind! Even though we do things wrong, God welcomes us back when we repent. Shall we say thank you to him for that now?

- Supplication:

Do you know anyone who doesn't want to repent, who doesn't want to know God our Father? What can we pray for them? Let's do that now.

### **SESSION TIME**

ACTS discussion and prayer does not need to take a long time; 5 or 10 minutes should be fine. If necessary prompt the children, give examples from your own life if they are struggling to think. If your group is struggling, you can just tell them what you think, and then you pray the prayer.

There are different ways of doing ACTS prayer: you could wait until you have discussed all four prayers and then pray. Or you could ask a child to pray a particular prayer straight after discussing it. Sometimes it is good to write down the prayer so the child can read it. Work out what is good for your group.

## TIPS

- Try asking specific questions to individual children. This helps to engage all the children.
- You don't need to do all four types of prayer each week, better to do two types really well than four badly.
- You can do the four prayers and discussion in a different order if that works better, it doesn't have to be ACTS. If there really isn't anything to pray from the story under one of the four headings, it's ok to miss it out!

## PRAYER IDEAS

Try the following methods to get the children praying:

- Pre-write out a prayer for them to say out loud
- If old enough get them to write prayers down themselves and pray them out loud
- Send round an object (eg pen), when a child has the object it is their turn to pray, if they don't want to pray, they can pass it on to the next person. Encourage short prayers that you have already discussed.
- 'Popcorn prayers': children and leaders pray very short prayers, not in any particular order, thus prayers that 'pop' out like corn popping out in a pan
- Ask children to finish a sentence eg Heavenly Father you are so amazing because...
- 'Balloon prayers': get children to write short prayers on a balloon; once they have said them they get to pop them with a balloon. Requires pre-blown up balloons
- Building block prayers: build a tower of blocks (Duplo® etc.), for each block the children must think of an adoration/thanksgiving prayer, try and see how high you can build, be careful to make sure the children are praying things from the story, not just very generic things to get an extra block.
- Bin the prayers: for confession prayers—children write out a confession prayer on a piece of paper that they scrunch up and throw away after praying their prayer, signifying that God has forgiven that sin.
- Skittle prayers: different coloured skittles relate to different types of prayer (ACTS), the child picks out a skittle, prays that kind of prayer and then can eat the skittle
- Dice prayer: similar to skittle prayers above. Different sides of a dice correspond to different types of prayer (ACTS)

## ...lead a digging deeper discussion

Aim: to get the children into the text of the Bible for themselves, to think about application and pray.

### **PRE-SESSION PREPERATION**

#### 1. Discussion preparation

Prepare your study beforehand, having studied the passage yourself, gauged the direction of the Bible talk, and thought about the application for the children.

Questions should include one or two observation questions and one or two thinking question to help the children apply something to their lives. Make sure that answers to observation questions come from the text.

Questions should be as simple as possible, help children by stating a verse to look at and then asking a question, eg

Look at v4; what does Jesus say?

Make the study fun and engaging. Avoid making digging deeper become too intense. Simple observation questions with some follow up questions are better than an in-depth Bible study. Avoid making it so only the academic children can participate.

To think through how effective your study questions might be, ask the following:

- Is it the Bible?
- Is it clear?
- Is it focused?
- Is it engaging?
- Does it get under the skin/does it bite?
- Is the application appropriate and tangible?

#### 2. Set-up

Ensure all that you need for the discussion, including Bible's, any visuals, and your study is prepared and ready to go.

Make sure your discussion area is free from distraction and is going to be conducive to your discussion.

### **SESSION TIME:**

#### 1. Find the passage for the story

Tell the children the Bible passage reference and ask them to turn to it in the Bible. Wait until everyone has found the passage. Don't make a thing about having to do this the quickest or put a spotlight on those who haven't found it. In the first few sessions explain chapter and verse. Some of the children may not know

how to find individual verses and passages. Some will find it hard and the idea is to give them confidence that they can find the passage. It's ok to give the page number or for a child to give the page number once they've found it. But the general pattern should be getting the children to know how they can look up passages for themselves.

## 2. Discussion

Lead the discussion using your pre-prepared questions.

Be patient and kind and gracious. Try to get all the children engaged and included. Try not to turn the study time into a competition, rather you are all a team trying to help each other and work together.

Thinking questions are harder and some children will think of answers quicker than others, don't be afraid to wait for others to think of an answer before hearing an answer from one of the children.

For older years it is worth thinking about how you can develop the children's Bible-handling and group discussion skills.

## 3. Prayer

Try to avoid asking questions like 'What should we pray from this passage?' as this maybe too open-ended for the children.

Think about one type of prayer (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, or Supplication) that particularly relates to your line of application and ask the children what they might like to pray in relation to this type of prayer.

See ACTS prayer guided walk through sheet for prayer tips.

## ...lead a game activity

Method 1:

Design a game which re-enforces the teaching point.

Method 2:

Use a pre-existing game and incorporate review questions into it.

### **PRE-SESSION PREPERATION**

Method 1: design a game. Bear in mind the following:

- Time and space restrictions
- Ability limitations
- Inclusiveness
- Props/equipment needed
- Health and safety risks
- What exactly you might be illustrating—it is very easy to accidentally illustrate a different point, or even the opposite, to the one intended.
- How you will explicitly and clearly link the game to the teaching

There is a very easy temptation to think it's more about the exuberance of the game rather than what it is trying to achieve. Be careful not to let the game become a distraction to the teaching or to the session as a whole.

Method 2:

1. Think of a game that would work well in your circumstance. Bear in mind the following:
  - Time and space restrictions
  - Ability limitations
  - Inclusiveness
  - Props/equipment needed
  - Health and safety risks
2. Write review questions for each of the following categories. Ensure you have enough for your time.
  - 'Remember' eg in the beginning what did God make?
  - 'Understand' eg why does God own us?
  - 'Apply' eg knowing God is in-charge, how should we treat him?

Gather any props and equipment you may need.

## ...lead a drama activity

### **PRE-SESSION PREPARATION**

Decide which part of the story you will dramatise, you don't necessarily need to do the whole story. Split your play into three scenes; these should be broadly the beginning, middle and end of the story. Write a short narration for each scene, and find short phrases for children to say, or actions which the children can act.

Decide which parts the children will play, including narrators (for children in Year 3 or older). If you don't have many characters in the Bible story you can get some of the children to be scenery! Eg A few children could be trees nearby, or the waves in a storm. Print the script for the narrator and write out any lines on small slips of paper for any children with smaller parts. Children love props and costumes; see if you can think of any props and simple costumes (just a hat will get them very excited!) to use in the play.

### **SAMPLE DISCUSSION PROGRESSION**

#### 1. Introduce the activity:

Lead the discussion by saying: "today our small group is to come up with a drama about today's story! Let's start by thinking about our story so we can make a really good play. After our discussion, we will put together our play and practice it. Everyone will have a part to play."

#### 2. Leading the discussion

"Let's think back over the story. Who are the most important people/things in the story? These can be people or animals or things." Write down the characters in big letters so the children can see them.

"Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. How did this story start? What happened in the middle? How did it end?" Write down things as the children say perhaps under three big headings—Scene 1, Scene 2 and Scene 3.

"We need to tell our audience what the story teaches us about God. So, what does our story teach us? What have we learnt about God?" Write down the answer for one of the children to read at the end of the play. 'Thank you for watching our play. Our play reminds us that.....'

"Last of all, we need a story title. So, what would be a good title for our story that sums up what is important?" Write down an answer for one of the children to read at the beginning: 'welcome to our play. Our play is called.....'

#### 3. Assigning parts

"Now I will assign each of you a part in the play. I would like you to be cheerful about whatever part you get, even if it's not the one you want the most."

## **PRACTICING THE PLAY**

With the children still sitting down, narrate each scene, telling the children what they will say/mime/act at each point. Then get the children all standing 'off stage' and walk through the play, showing the children where you want them to be, what you want them to do. Practice the play all the way through a few times.

## ...lead a craft activity

### **PRE-SESSION PREPARATION**

Plan, source, and prepare a craft. Ensure there are enough materials. It is worth doing a craft beforehand to make sure it works as you wish and to have one to show the children.

### **SESSION TIME**

- Discussion groups

(If it seems appropriate the ACTS discussion and prayer or digging deeper discussion can be done after the craft—as long as it does get done.)

- Craft making

Explain to the children clearly what the craft is and what they must do. It is likely the children will need individual instructions repeated one at a time as they complete each part.

Whilst the children are busy with their hands, leaders should engage individual children in conversation about the story using the craft. Good questions to ask are about the story's content, the story's meaning, and the story's application. These questions can be spread between encouraging comments about what the children are making.

### **WORKED EXAMPLE:**

You've just taught pre-school age children Mark 7:1–12, where King Jesus says our hearts are bad and friends of King Jesus know they are naughty inside. The craft involves colouring in a picture of a boy/girl that opens up to reveal a bad heart inside. Some questions to ask while colouring in and pasting could be:

- What happens when we look at this boy's/girl's heart? (What colour are you going to use for their heart? Why?)
- What does King Jesus say about this boy's/girl's heart?
- What did we learn about what our hearts are like? Are we the same or different to this boy/girl?
- What sort of naughty things do we do?
- Can you remember what Jesus says about why we do naughty things? (Why do we not always listen to mummy or daddy/say mean things/are not nice to people etc?)

## ...lead a memory verse activity

### PRE-SESSION PREPARATIONS

Learn the memory verse in advance. It is much easier to teach others when you already know it. Make sure you understand what the memory verse means. Work out how you will teach the children to learn it, and what game you might use to help. Think up some concrete examples of what the memory verse means or how it applies—it will be useful to share these with the children as you discuss.

### SESSION TIME

#### 1. ACTS prayer/digging deeper.

(If it seems appropriate the ACTS prayer/digging deeper can be done after discussing the verse or after the game—as long as it does get done.)

#### 2. Finding the verse

For older groups: get the children to find and highlight the verse in their Bible.

For younger groups: have the verse already written up in large for all the children to see.

#### 3. Understanding the verse

Read through the verse slowly. Spend some time asking questions about the verse. Help the children to help each other—if one child knows an answer ask them to explain it to the rest.

Below are the three main areas to ask about.

- What does it say?

Make sure the children know what all the individual words mean. Explain where necessary.

- What does it mean?

Make sure the children understand what the verse means. Explain where necessary. Share a concrete example of what it means.

- What does it mean to me?

Think about how the verse applies to the children. Share a concrete example of how the verse applies.

#### 4. Learning the verse

Say the verse together three or four times.

Play a game to help the group commit the verse to memory. Any game or activity which incorporates learning the verse will do. Here are some suggestions:

- Create a rhyme or song for the verse
- Print out the verse in full, partially completed, and not completed. Get the children to fill in the blanks.
- 'Memory verse ping pong': two children stand opposite each other and throw a ball between them. Each time they catch the ball they must say the next word of the memory verse. If a child gets the word wrong, they swap out or start again.
- Print out each word of the verse. Shuffle the words and distribute them amongst the children. Leave them to order themselves in the correct order, or, get them to stand up and shout out their word as the group makes its way through the verse.

