

WEEKLY@

January - April
2020

Lectionary based Sunday group resource aimed at
5-11 year olds with additional activity ideas for those in
creche and youth groups.



THE BLACKBURN
DIOCESEAN BOARD
OF EDUCATION



WELCOME

Weekly@ is a weekly lectionary based resource with activity suggestions for all age ranges from creche to youth groups. Using colour codes to help you identify activities suitable for your children, Weekly@ aims to offer a simple, flexible bible-based resource sheet, plus a handy 'take home' sheet which helps parents carry on the conversation at home. We recommend that you start by 'Setting the Scene' and how you arrange the rest of the session is up to you!



GUEST WRITER

Clare Serfontein

This term Weekly@ has been written by the brilliant Clare Serfontein. Clare has over twenty years' experience working with children and families. She started out as a paediatric nurse but soon moved into church based children's ministry and schools work. In 2012 Clare moved from the UK to South Africa to work for a charity aiming to encourage and empower children and families in disadvantaged communities. Here she met her husband Charles and has since settled in the country on a more permanent basis. Clare also has an MA in Children and Youth Ministry.

COLOUR CODES

Weekly@ is categorised by colour codes which represent the different ages that we feel an activity is suitable for, however they are just our suggestions, so please feel free to use them with other age groups if you feel it's appropriate. You may find that some weeks have more All Age activities than others. Some activity headings might be split colours, meaning they are suitable for the two age groups they represent.

Under 5s

Suitable for those aged 5 and under, typically those in creche.

All Age

Suitable for all groups, from creche to youth group.

5-11s

Suitable for those aged 5-11.

Over 12s

Suitable for Sunday youth groups.

1st March 2020

PUT TO THE TEST

Matthew 4 v 1-11

Overview

The bible passage for today focuses on the temptation of Jesus which is described in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We are told that after being baptised by John the Baptist, Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights in the wilderness. During this time, Satan appeared to Jesus and tried to tempt him towards sin. The Greek verb translated as tempted can also mean tested and the tests Jesus faced were preparing him for his ministry. They were tests that examined key aspects of the relationship between Father God and Jesus, and how misuse of this special relationship could ruin Jesus' ministry. Everyone faces tests in life, some of which can be very hard but sometimes these tests prepare us for what is ahead.

Aim

To understand God is always with us in testing times and he will help us through them.

Song Suggestion

Not Forgotten - Hillsong Kids
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h4WoS9_jfY

All Age Talk

Explain to the congregation that this morning you are inviting them to participate in a Memory Game Challenge. You will need 20-25 items on a tray or pictures of the items on the screen. You will also need paper and pens for the people in the congregation. Ask everyone to look at all the items on the screen / tray for a few minutes, as you name each item. Then hide the picture on the screen or take the tray away and challenge everyone to make a list of as many items as they can remember. Give them a minute or two to make their lists.

When everyone has had time to recall and make their list, go over the items again one at a time, so they can tick off which ones they got right. Find out how many of the items people remembered. Was it an easy challenge or a hard one?

We all face tests or challenges in life; some are easier to deal with than others.

The Bible tells us that Jesus "was tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." (Hebrews 4 v 15). Temptation all by itself isn't sinful, it's what we do when we're tempted that matters. Sometimes it's really hard to walk away from something we want (even if it's something we know we shouldn't have.) But when we give in to temptation that often leads us into sin. In today's bible reading Jesus was tempted and faced some difficult challenges but he used his knowledge and experience of God to help him face those challenges. God knows that we will be tempted by many things and will face tests and challenges in our lives, but like Jesus, he has given us his Word in the bible to help us through these times.

Prayer

Thank you God, that whatever challenges we face, we don't do it on our own. Help us to remember that you're always with us. Amen

WEEKLY@

Set the Scene

Show the children pictures of tests/challenges from all areas of life that we face as we grow e.g. swimming a length, writing our name, making a friend. Explain some challenges may seem easy, some hard and some were once hard. Is there a challenge here you can do now but once found hard? Explain that completing these challenges helps us grow and develop further than before.

Discussion

You will need a drawstring bag containing a stone, a bread roll, a picture of the Temple, an angel, a small globe and a bible. Take the props out of the bag and pass them round the circle as you tell the story.

Test 1 *Take out the bread (encourage everyone to take a little piece and eat it if you like but be mindful of allergies).* Jesus was in the desert and had been fasting (going without food) for 40 days. He was very hungry.

Take out the stone and read out Matthew 4 v 3. Jesus was being tested to not use his God given power for the wrong things.

This is how he replied. Read Matthew 4 v 4.

Test 2 *Take out the pictures of the Temple and the angel. Read out verses 5-7.*

Jesus was being tested to fully trust God and not to put God to the test.

Test 3 *Take out the small globe. Read verses 8 - 11.*

Jesus was being tested to carry out the work God had given him and not take any shortcuts to fulfilling his mission on earth. *Take out the bible.* Explain that Jesus passed each test by using the scriptures to guide him so he knew what he should and shouldn't do. Jesus was about to start his earthly ministry and used his knowledge and understanding of the Father and his Word to teach others about God. Sometimes you and I may be tested by the temptation to do the wrong thing. What can we learn from Jesus for when we're in this situation? Today we are going to be thinking about some of the difficult challenges and tests we face as we go through life. It helps to do what Jesus did and call on the bible for guidance so we can try to make the right choices.

Take Home

Dynamic Duo Show the children a picture of Batman and Robin and ask if they know who they are. Explain that Batman and Robin always work together to get difficult jobs done. We are part of an even better dynamic duo; God is always with us when we face difficult times. Use this link to print out superhero pictures: <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/112238215696726428/>

Let the children choose one to colour in that represents themselves and on the back write 'The Lord your God is with you' Joshua 1 v 9.

Response

Collective Prayer Ask the children to squeeze their fists tightly and think about any tests they're facing. Pray: Father God these tough tests we face take lots of our strength. Now encourage the children to put their hands flat, facing upwards. Pray: Father God help us remember your love and strength is always with us. Finally, all hold hands in a circle. Pray: *Father God thank you for those who give us support when we face hard times. Amen*

Activity

Marshmallow Spaghetti Tower Challenge

Split the children into small groups. Each group needs a tray to build on, mini marshmallows and dried spaghetti. Challenge the groups to build the tallest, free standing tower using only spaghetti and marshmallows. Once you decide they have had enough time, judge the towers. As well as comparing structure and height, you could also test stability by giving the trays a shake! How hard was the challenge? Which parts were difficult? What tests and challenges in life do you find difficult? Explain challenges might be hard but we don't face them alone; God, our families and friends are with us.

Game

Ball Bounce Challenge Provide several table tennis balls and bats. The children can take it in turns to face the challenge where they have to each bounce the ball ten times in a row on their bat without dropping the ball. Explain the more we practice the more prepared we become and the easier a challenge is to do.

1st March 2020

PUT TO THE TEST

Matthew 4 v 1-11

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

What is the hardest test/challenge you have ever faced? Why?

What helped you through that test/challenge?

FAMILY PRAYER

Challenge each other to a thumb war. Afterwards share how the challenges we face can sometimes feel too hard, or impossible to do (like winning at thumb wars!) but God is always close to us in these times and we can bring them to him. Each share a tough challenge you are currently facing. *Pray:*

*Thank you God that you are always alongside us especially when times are tough.
Be with us this week. Amen*

1st March 2020

PUT TO THE TEST

Matthew 4 v 1-11

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

What is the hardest test/challenge you have ever faced? Why?

What helped you through that test/challenge?

FAMILY PRAYER

Challenge each other to a thumb war. Afterwards share how the challenges we face can sometimes feel too hard, or impossible to do (like winning at thumb wars!) but God is always close to us in these times and we can bring them to him. Each share a tough challenge you are currently facing. *Pray:*

*Thank you God that you are always alongside us especially when times are tough.
Be with us this week. Amen*

Overview

The Pharisees were a group of Jews who were fastidious in keeping the letter of the Law and often opposed Jesus throughout his ministry. Nicodemus is described as a Pharisee and a leader of the Jews. In today's reading, John describes how Nicodemus came to speak with Jesus at night in order to ask him some questions. Many have speculated that Nicodemus was afraid or ashamed to visit Jesus in broad daylight, so he made a nighttime visit. This may very well have been the case, but the text does not give a reason for the timing of the visit. Jesus gave Nicodemus the illustration of rebirth for how people enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus stresses the character of this new birth and explains that there is nothing optional about it. Jesus wants to transform our lives. When we ask Jesus to come into our lives there is a change in our heart and mind and we become like new. A new creation.

Aim

To understand that Jesus wants to transform our lives.

Song Suggestion

So Glad - Vineyard Kids

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_xp5zPokWs

All Age Talk

For this morning's illustration you will need to wear two sets of clothes, one on top of the other. Wear something very different to your normal clothes underneath, with your normal clothes on top. Make sure the outfit underneath is not visible.

Share some areas of your life that are not going great. You can make them up, for example, you messed up at work which meant your boss missed an important meeting, you got distracted whilst ironing and burnt a hole in your spouse's best shirt, you were late back to your car whilst it was parked and got a parking ticket, etc. Then say "So I have decided to change. I am going to change into a new person".

Take off your top layer of clothing.

This is the new me! Now I am a completely changed person! What do people think?

Explain that however much we may want it to, changing the way we dress does not change who we are. However, our bible reading today tells us there is a real way to bring change in our lives and that is through God who transforms us.

Ask people to reflect on areas in their life where they would like to see change.

Prayer

Father God, we pray for the areas in our life where we would like to see change. Send your Holy Spirit into those places and transform them. Amen

Set the Scene

You will need enough playdough for everyone to join in. Give each child a lump of playdough. Ask the children to create a brand-new creature that no one has seen before. When they've finished let them show and describe their creature to the group.

Discussion

The NCT version of the Bible has been used for telling this story. Draw the pictures as described on flipchart paper as you speak. These drawings can be as elaborate as you like, or simple stick men.

1. Draw a man surrounded by darkness. v 1-2 *There was a man named Nicodemus who was one of the Pharisees and an important Jewish leader. One night Nicodemus came to Jesus.*
2. Draw Jesus.
3. Draw a speech bubble between Jesus and Nicodemus. v 3 *Jesus said to Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot be in God's kingdom."*
4. Draw a baby. v 4 *Nicodemus said, "But if a person is already old, how can he be born again? He cannot enter his mother's womb again. So how can a person be born a second time?"*
5. Draw two people with a baby. v 6 *"Human life comes from human parents" Then draw a flame to demonstrate spiritual life with an arrow up and the word SPIRIT as you say "but spiritual life comes from the Spirit"*
6. Write the word - How? v 9 *Nicodemus asked, "How can this happen?"*
7. Draw a heart, the world and a cross and end by writing the word LIFE. v 16 *Jesus explains "God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him may not be lost but have eternal life."*

What do you think this story is about? What do you think Jesus meant when he talked about new life and being born again? Jesus tells Nicodemus that a person is "born again" when the Spirit of God enters into his heart. Explain that when Jesus is in our lives, he wants to help us transform, to become new, to change in the places we want to/need to. We don't need to try and do this by ourselves, because he gives us the Holy Spirit to help us do this.

Take Home

Jumping Frog Teach the children to each make an easy origami jumping frog using this link:

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

Let the children take their frogs home as a reminder that just as the tadpole changes into a frog, so God transforms us into something amazing too.

Response

Change Cut up some pipe cleaners to symbolise caterpillars. Invite the children to pick up a caterpillar and think of an area in their life that they would like God to help change. Then let each child make a butterfly picture thanking God while they make it that he can help them to change into a new creation.

Activity

Scratch Picture Provide the children with scratch art card and wooden skewer or prepare your own in advance of the session. Use different coloured wax crayons to make coloured strips across a large piece of white card. Make sure the whole card is covered. Paint over the wax crayon with black paint mixed with a little bit of dishwashing detergent. Let the paint dry then carefully cut the card into smaller pieces. As they draw their picture the colours underneath will be revealed and so transform the black card into something beautiful.

Game

Changing Places Choose 4 or 5 things that change into something else e.g. coal, tadpoles, caterpillars, water, sand. Stand in a circle and allocate an even number of children to each of these things. When you say an object, e.g. coal, the children who are 'coal' should swap places with each other. You could play this game using a parachute if you have one. Afterwards, explain that the children had been given the names of things that transform into something else. Can they tell you what? Have pictures to show what they transform into e.g. Coal = diamond, tadpole = frog, caterpillar = butterfly.

8th March 2020

CHANGED

John 3 v 1-17

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Share examples of things that you've seen change. These could be things like leaves changing on the trees, dough turning into bread, etc.

Have you ever seen someone changed because of their relationship with Jesus?

FAMILY PRAYER

Use fruit juice to make apple, orange or other fruit flavoured ice cubes. As you make the ice cubes discuss how the liquid changes to ice when the temperature goes below its freezing point. When the ice cubes are ready, use the ice cubes to make drinks with still / sparkling water. As you drink, talk together about any situations where you would like God to bring transformation/change. Pray together:

Father God, please work in these situations that we have shared. Thank you that you bring change. Amen

8th March 2020

CHANGED

John 3 v 1-17

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Share examples of things that you've seen change. These could be things like leaves changing on the trees, dough turning into bread, etc.

Have you ever seen someone changed because of their relationship with Jesus?

FAMILY PRAYER

Use fruit juice to make apple, orange or other fruit flavoured ice cubes. As you make the ice cubes discuss how the liquid changes to ice when the temperature goes below its freezing point. When the ice cubes are ready, use the ice cubes to make drinks with still / sparkling water. As you drink, talk together about any situations where you would like God to bring transformation/change. Pray together:

Father God, please work in these situations that we have shared. Thank you that you bring change. Amen

Overview

Verses 13 -14 from today's reading say 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again but whoever drinks the water I give them will never be thirsty again. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.' Throughout the Old Testament there is this link between water and the spirit, with many links between water and God's promises. The woman at the well was only thinking of the water at a human level; water that meant she would not have to return to the well each day, but Jesus was using the water as a symbol for God's Spirit. When we have God's Holy Spirit living in us we do not thirst because his Spirit never runs out. The living water Jesus is offering is God's Spirit, who will be here with us now and always.

Aim

To understand that God's Holy Spirit is available to all of us and will never run dry.

Song Suggestion

One Thing Remains - Bethel Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZO3vS1ugAHU>

All Age Talk

Bring with you a long hose and a bucket. You will need to connect the hose up to a tap to use in the illustration, but make sure the tap is turned off at the start of your talk. If you do not have access to a tap, you could use a camping water carrier with a tap which you can connect to. Place this out of sight of the congregation, connect the hose, but again, make sure the tap is turned off.

Explain that you need a bucket of water for your talk today so you have set up the hose so that someone can fill it for you. Ask a teenager or an adult (since hoses can be hard to control and you are inside!) to come up and help you by filling the bucket while you talk. As they go to fill the bucket, they will discover that no water is coming from the hose. Say: 'Oh no I must have forgotten to connect it to the tap'. Have someone primed to help you near the tap to connect you to the water by turning on the tap. While they turn the tap on, talk about how it can be the same in our walk with God. God offers us living water; his Holy Spirit, who refreshes us but we need to be connected.

Ask the volunteer to try to fill the bucket again and as the water streams out, explain that now it is connected to the tap, the water flows through. This water will not stop flowing unless we stop it. It is connected to the mains and there is a never ending supply of water. It's the same when we connect to God; we receive a never ending supply of him and his great love for us.

Ask people to quietly reflect for a few minutes on how well connected to God they are at the moment.

Prayer

Thank you God that your love never runs dry. Help us to stay connected to you this week. Amen

Set the Scene

You will need straws, sellotape and cups of water. The children need to work in groups to make the 'world's longest drinking straw'. The straw must work effectively and allow them to suck up water. Ask the children to share a time when they were really thirsty. How did it feel when they finally had a drink? We need water to live; we can only last a few days without it.

Discussion

Who knows what a well is? Do we still use wells today? We don't use wells in the UK these days but in other countries around the world, people still have to go to the well or pump to get the water they need. What do people use the water from the wells for? Water to drink, for washing clothes, cooking, drinking water for giving animals, watering crops, etc.

The Well Challenge - you will need two large, clean plastic boxes or baby baths part-filled with drinkable water, two small, clean buckets on long ropes, two chairs, two trays and four large jugs (two per team). At one side of the room place each of the plastic boxes behind a chair, then place the bucket with rope attached on the chair. Place the trays with the jugs on top opposite the boxes at the other side of the room. Split the group in two and have them line up at the end by their tray. The children need to collect enough water from the 'well' for everyone to have a drink. They will work as a team sending one person at a time to collect water. This they do by standing carefully on the chair and lowering the bucket on the rope into the plastic box to scoop out some water. They gently pull it up and take the water back to their team, pouring it into the jug. Keep going until the jugs are full.

Afterwards gather the children together. Explain that the bible story we are looking at today was based around a well. Read the story to them from John 4 v 5-19 and v 25-26. You may wish to use some of the well challenge items as props as you read. Jesus talked about giving the woman at the well living water that would never run dry, what do you think he meant by that? The Bible teaches us that we have a thirst in our heart for the living God and that is a thirst that only Jesus can satisfy. So, when we have Jesus in our heart, he totally satisfies our thirst for God and we will never thirst again!

Take Home

Lava Lamp Let each child make their own lava lamp to take home. <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/485051822366733413/>
As you make the lamps remind the children that God's Holy Spirit in us is like living water, which wants to bubble up and spill over, so that others can also experience God's love.

Response

Drink Give everyone a cup and pour out some water collected in the jugs during the Well Challenge. Ask everyone to reflect on why they are thankful for water. Thank God for water as you all drink. Ask the children to check their empty cups. Remind them that water can run out but God's Holy Spirit never does. Refill the cups. Thank God as you drink, that his Holy Spirit is always with us.

Activity

Leak-proof Bag Experiment See the instructions and try this fun experiment. <http://pagingfunmums.com/2014/05/25/leak-proof-bag-kids-science-experiment/>
Show how happy you are that the bag did not leak, and you didn't lose the water. The water on our planet is very precious. We need to make sure we don't waste it, so it doesn't run out. Ask the children what practical things could be done at home to make sure they don't overuse/waste water. Turn taps off fully so no water drips out, don't let the water run while we brush our teeth, switch it on and off, etc.

Game

Balance Challenge the children to walk across the room with a book balanced on their head; if it falls off, they have to go back and try again. You could do this as a relay race in teams. Afterwards, pass round a picture of someone carrying water on their head. Tell their story of the distance they walk and how much the water weighs. <https://www.worldvision.org/clean-water-news-stories/carrying-water-pain-neck>
Do you think you could carry water on your head like that?

15th March 2020

LIVING WATER

John 4 v 5-26

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Share a time when you remember being really thirsty. What were you doing?

Have you ever had a time where you ran out of water?

FAMILY PRAYER

Fill a glass with water and look at it closely. Discuss, is it clean? Is it safe to drink? Explain how we normally don't look because we accept it is clean and safe but others in the world get their water from dirty streams and it carries diseases. You may want to look at some of the information here:

<https://www.wateraid.org/uk/why-wateraid> Pray:

Help us God to be grateful for our water. Help us to remember those people in other parts of the world who don't have clean water to drink. Amen

15th March 2020

LIVING WATER

John 4 v 5-26

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Share a time when you remember being really thirsty. What were you doing?

Have you ever had a time where you ran out of water?

FAMILY PRAYER

Fill a glass with water and look at it closely. Discuss, is it clean? Is it safe to drink? Explain how we normally don't look because we accept it is clean and safe but others in the world get their water from dirty streams and it carries diseases. You may want to look at some of the information here:

<https://www.wateraid.org/uk/why-wateraid> Pray:

Help us God to be grateful for our water. Help us to remember those people in other parts of the world who don't have clean water to drink. Amen

Overview

In the bible passage for today we see that Jesus was in Jerusalem to celebrate a feast. More and more people were following him and bringing the sick and diseased for him to heal. The words that Jesus taught showed an authority that baffled many and they wondered if he could be the Christ. The Jewish Leaders continued to watch Jesus and engaged in conversations where they might trap him saying something wrong. John 9 records Jesus performing the amazing miracle of giving sight to a blind man. Giving sight to the blind had been predicted as a messianic activity by the prophet Isaiah and so this pointed to who Jesus was. Jesus explains that the man's blindness is an opportunity for 'the power of God to be seen' in Jesus (John 9 v 3 (NLT)). This same incredible power of God is at work in and through our lives today.

Aim

To know that God has power to do amazing things. He is at work in us and the world today through the power of his Holy Spirit.

Song Suggestion

Supernatural God - Hillsong Kids
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7S1I5kb0PQ>

All Age Talk

Bring a variety of items in that need power to work, be it through batteries, electricity or another power source e.g. a windup toy or wind turbine. Try and source a variety of things so that people have to think. You could show pictures of the items instead if that is easier. Ask for some volunteers to come to the front to hold the items / pictures up so people can see them.

Ask the congregation if they can work out what all these items have in common. What links them together?

If no one gets the answer explain that they all need power to work. Ask if people can share the different power sources the items need.

In our bible reading today Jesus was walking with his disciples when they saw a man who had been blind since birth. The disciples thought that man was blind because he or his parents had sinned, but Jesus told them, "It is not because of his sins or his parents' sins. This happened so that the power of God could be seen in his life." Then Jesus knelt down, spit on the ground, and made some mud. He took the mud and put it on the blind man's eyes. He told him, "Now, go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam." The man went and washed the mud from his eyes and when he came back, he could see!

Jesus shares that God is the source of his amazing power in healing the blind man. This same incredible power of God is at work in and through our lives today.

Prayer

All powerful God, your power is at work throughout the universe. Thank you that your same power is also at work in each of our lives. Amen

Set the Scene

Show the children a light bulb and ask them what else you would need to get the bulb to light up. They are likely to suggest batteries, wires and a plug, etc. Get out some potatoes. Would these make the light bulb come on? Show the children how the potato can power the bulb. <https://sciencing.com/potato-light-bulb-experiment-kids-12105514.html> Share how power can come in the most unexpected ways.

Discussion

Bring in some soil in a big bowl (or two bowls) so that the children can sit round it, and a jug of water.

Ask the children what happens to the soil when we add water? Pour the water into the soil. Ask the children if they would like to put their hands in it and feel it? Let the children who want to have a go. Discuss with all the children (those feeling the mud and those not) – how would you feel about having this mud rubbed on your eyes? After a while let children wash their hands and get ready for the story.

Explain that in today's story Jesus used dirt and water to do something amazing. Invite the children help you act out the story. You will need to choose two children to play Jesus and the blind man and then divide the rest of the group into disciples or neighbours. Gather the following props to help you; a bowl of water for the Pool of Siloam, a blindfold, some hand cream to represent the mud. Blindfold the child acting the blind man at the start of your storytelling. Read from John 9 v 1-12. When you get to verse 6 have 'Jesus' take a small amount of hand lotion and pretend to spit on it and then gently rub the lotion on to the blindfold. The blind child goes to wash at the pool, removing their blindfold and washing their eyes.

Afterwards ask the children: How would you have reacted if you were one of the blind man's neighbours and he told you his story? Jesus explained in this passage that healing the blind man showed everyone the power of God at work. Do you think God's power is still at work today?

Take Home

Party Popper Discuss what happens when you pop a party popper. God gives each of us his Holy Spirit so his power and life are inside us. Party poppers do not fulfil their purpose unless they are popped. Similarly, God wants us to use his power in us to help others and to fulfil his purpose for us. Give everyone a party popper to pop at home so they can remember that God's Holy Spirit is in them ready to burst out to help others.

Response

Static Electricity Prayers Use balloons and tissue paper to pray into areas where the children want God to come and work in his power.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/2015/10/static-electricity-prayers.html>

Activity

Invisible Force Place 10-15 items along the edge of a table that can be blown off with varying amounts of force e.g. a ping pong ball, a tissue, a plastic cup, etc. The children should stand at the opposite side of the table with straws and attempt to blow the items off. Afterwards review which items were the easiest to blow off and which were the hardest. Although we didn't SEE what blew the items off the table, we know SOMETHING is moving these things, what is it? Wind created by blowing down the straw. Discuss the power of the Holy Spirit. Even though we cannot physically see God's Holy Spirit, it is at work in the world in powerful ways.

Game

Blind Man's Bluff Blindfold a child. The rest of the group should move around the blindfolded child who must try and tag one of them. When someone has been tagged, swap so that child is blindfolded. Afterwards ask how it felt being blindfolded. Discuss what they think it would be like to be blind and never able to see.

22nd March 2020

POWER

John 9 v 1-12

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

What is the most powerful thing you've ever seen?

In what ways have you seen God's power at work?

FAMILY PRAYER

Everyone should find something that uses batteries. Open one of the items and look at the batteries inside it. Discuss how without the battery power it can do nothing. God promises us his Holy Spirit to give us the power we need. Share where you need God's power this week. Each of you should hold the battery powered item that you have brought and pray:

Thank you God for your Holy Spirit who lives inside me. Give me the power I need this week. Amen.

22nd March 2020

POWER

John 9 v 1-12

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

What is the most powerful thing you've ever seen?

In what ways have you seen God's power at work?

FAMILY PRAYER

Everyone should find something that uses batteries. Open one of the items and look at the batteries inside it. Discuss how without the battery power it can do nothing. God promises us his Holy Spirit to give us the power we need. Share where you need God's power this week. Each of you should hold the battery powered item that you have brought and pray:

Thank you God for your Holy Spirit who lives inside me. Give me the power I need this week. Amen.

Overview

Mary, Martha and Lazarus were friends of Jesus. He had visited them at their home before (Luke 10 v 38). Mary and Martha therefore ask Jesus to come when Lazarus is sick knowing he could help. They are angry with Jesus because he did not come when they asked and by the time he arrives Lazarus has died. God's plans though were bigger than those of Mary and Martha, and Jesus moved at God's direction. He explains to the disciples "Lazarus is dead and for your sakes I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come let's go see him" (John 11 v 14-15). Jesus hadn't missed the opportunity; he arrived at just the right time. Lazarus was brought back to life and many saw this amazing miracle and put their faith in Jesus because of it (John 11 v 45).

Aim

To recognise that God's timing is perfect.

Song Suggestion

Every move I make - Hillsong Kids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dgf1YzscBLE>

All Age Talk

Place a number of clocks set to different time zones from around the world all over the church. Ask the congregation to look for the clocks and if they find one, bring it up to the front. Once all of the clocks have been found, ask the people that brought them forward to hold them up and read out what time it says. Ask the congregation: Which of these clocks is correct?

Point out that actually all the clocks are correct. They are all set for real times that are happening now around the world. Can anyone guess what part of the world some of the different clocks are set for? Let the congregation guess and then reveal the answers for the ones that people don't know.

In the Gospel reading for this morning, Jesus received word from Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, that their brother was very ill. When Jesus heard about it, he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. This has happened so that God will receive Glory from this." So, although Jesus loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus he stayed where he was for two more days. Finally, he told his disciples that he was going to Bethany to the home of his friends. When Jesus arrived, Mary and Martha greeted him with frustration that he had not arrived sooner because their brother had died. But it didn't matter because when they took Jesus to Lazarus's tomb, he prayed to God and then called in a loud voice, "Lazarus come out!" Then Lazarus walked out of the tomb; he had been raised from the dead.

We sometimes feel impatient that things in our lives are not happening at the right time, but what we think is the right time may not match God's time. God is beyond time, which means he knows when the time is absolutely right. God's timing is perfect.

Prayer

Father God in the waiting that can seem endless help us to trust in your loving purposes for us. Amen

Set the Scene

Ask all the children to stand up and explain that they are going to participate in a challenge where they have to sit down when they think a minute has passed. The leader says go and times a minute whilst watching and noting who sits down closest to the time. When all the children are sat down, share who got the closest. How did it feel waiting for a minute? Did it seem longer or shorter than you expected?

Discussion

Prepare a timeline on a long piece of paper by drawing a horizontal line across the middle. Then add vertical lines and label them Day 1, Day 2, Day 3, Day 4, Day 5 and Day 6. (Day 6 will need a big space as lots happens). You will also need Blu-tack, printed pictures of 1. Lazarus, 2. Mary, 3. Martha, 4. Jesus, 5. Messenger, 6. Disciples, 7. Crowd, 8. Tomb, 9. Lazarus in grave-clothes, and the words 10. Bethany and 11. Perea.

Day 1 - Place pictures 1, 2, 3 and 10 on Day 1. *Mary, Martha and Lazarus were siblings who lived together in a place called Bethany. Jesus loved them very much. One day Lazarus was sick and so Mary and Martha sent a messenger to Jesus.*

Day 2 - Place picture 5 on Day 2. *It took a whole day for the messenger to reach Jesus. Add pictures 4 & 11. He told Jesus the message from Martha and Mary which was, 'Lord the one you love is sick.'*

Day 3 and 4 - *Jesus heard the message but stayed where he was for two more days. Move Jesus and Perea along through days 3 & 4 to day 5.*

Day 5 - Add picture 6. Read out John 11 v 11-15.

Day 6 - Place pictures 7 & 8 on day 6, then move in pictures 4, 6, 2, 3 and 10. *On Jesus' arrival he found Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. Many had come to comfort Mary and Martha. When Martha heard Jesus was there, she went to meet him. Move the Martha picture to be with Jesus off to one side. Read out John 11 v 21-26. Move Mary to join them. Martha called Mary to come join them. Read out John 11 v 29-33. Move pictures 2, 3 & 4 close to 8, with 6 & 7 behind. Read out John 11 v 34-42.*

Place picture 9 near 8. Read out John 11 v 43-45.

Ask: Which part of the story did you like the best and why?

Take Home

Paper Weaving See the link for instructions for how to make woven paper pictures to take home:

<https://za.pinterest.com/pin/369365606916197934/?lp=true>

As the children weave, discuss how in weaving sometimes it's hard to see at the beginning what the picture will look like but eventually all the bits come together to make it beautiful. It's the same with our walk with God; sometimes we don't understand but later we may see how it came together beautifully. You could laminate the weavings to make dinner mats.

You will also need to give each child 5 sunflower seeds to accompany their take home sheet.

WEEKLY@

Response

Patience Do this following the game. How did it feel waiting to get a six? Was it hard waiting to eat your Maltesers? It can be hard being patient. God understands that, so we can bring our frustrations to him. Let everyone have one of their Maltesers. As they eat ask them to think of a situation where they need patience. Pray for God's help with this.

Activity

Jigsaw Give the group an easy jigsaw to complete with the picture to help them (provide several puzzles if you have a large group). When they've completed the puzzle praise them for what they've achieved then give them a second jigsaw. This time make the puzzle harder and don't show them the picture. Was it frustrating doing the second puzzle, not knowing what the end result would be? Is it easier to have the picture in front of you? We may not understand things that happen because we cannot see the big picture. God can see the big picture and understands what is going on in a way we can't, so we have to trust him.

Game

Suck It Up All players sit in a circle with an empty cup (with their name written on it) and a straw. In the centre of the circle, place a large bowl of Maltesers. Each player takes turns rolling a dice, aiming to roll a six. When a six is rolled, that player moves to the bowl in the centre and uses their straw to suck up a Malteser and deposit it in their cup. At the end of the game, see who has rolled the most sixes, and therefore collected the most Maltesers.

29th March 2020

TIME

John 11 v 1-45

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Have you ever been terribly late for someone or something?

Share a time when you had to wait for something.

FAMILY PRAYER

Growing things takes patience because we plant something and then wait.
Share with each other an area in your life where you want to ask for God's patience. Now plant a sunflower seed in a pot for each member of the family.
Over time see who can grow the tallest sunflower. Pray together:
Father God, we bring you the areas of our lives where we struggle to wait. Please give us your patience. Amen

29th March 2020

TIME

John 11 v 1-45

Ask your child what they did during church today.

Tell them what you learnt during church today.

Have you ever been terribly late for someone or something?

Share a time when you had to wait for something.

FAMILY PRAYER

Growing things takes patience because we plant something and then wait.
Share with each other an area in your life where you want to ask for God's patience. Now plant a sunflower seed in a pot for each member of the family.
Over time see who can grow the tallest sunflower. Pray together:
Father God, we bring you the areas of our lives where we struggle to wait. Please give us your patience. Amen