



# spill the beans

worship and learning resources for all ages

issue 35

trinity to pentecost 12

7 june to 23 august 2020

[spillbeans.org.uk](http://spillbeans.org.uk)  
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A resource with a Scottish flavour for  
Worship Leaders, Sunday Schools, Junior  
Churches and Youth Leaders based on the  
Revised Common Lectionary.



# introduction

Welcome to the third issue of a new three year collection of Spill the Beans. We have returned to the Revised Common Lectionary for 2019-2022 with new material as we take another tour through that lectionary over the coming years.

**We recognise that this issue is being released at a very uncertain time for congregations around the world with regular patterns of worship disturbed and many creative experiments on-going. We pray that these resources will be of assistance in this time and we freely offer them as a gift to the body of Christ.**

## Who Are We?

At the beginning of 2009 a conversation began amongst a couple, then a few, then a group about collaboratively creating resources that enabled us to tell the story of faith in a worship context and within age groups for younger people and teens. Spill the Beans was born as the result of that conversation and has grown and developed over the intervening years.

The ethos has remained the same, however. It is all about story. For we believe story is the lifeblood of faith. In story we can tell the truth and speak with honesty about things for which there are not yet words. Story contains mystery and is the poetry that forms faith. Stories grow as we grow and can reveal new truths at different times in our lives.

So we believe giving stories to people is one of the most important things we can do in sharing our faith. Children and adults hold stories in their being and keep coming back to them throughout life. Our culture is stored in story. The same is true for our faith.

Spill the Beans is a work of love. None of the contributors are paid for their contributions, these contributions are written and prepared with our own congregations in mind. Instead of working in isolation, we bring this work together, give it some spit and polish, and share it with others. This is how we can keep the cost so low.

In addition, we regularly pay it forward by using surplus monies to support other new ministries and projects.

## Collaboration

The team is delighted that we are in a creative collaboration with Fischy Music ([www.fischy.com](http://www.fischy.com)). Our shared vision is to introduce new songs with each issue of Spill the Beans.

In this issue we introduce another new song called *A Little More*. Music and words are provided in this issue and you should receive in the download pack audio tracks to accompany.

This is an exciting new development and we hope you will find the results of this collaboration with Fischy Music a blessing for your worship in the years to come.

## Archive Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary Resources

We have two Overspill packages that provide complete sets of past issues that give a huge library of resources for both the Revised Common Lectionary and Narrative Lectionary.

### The Revised Common Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 1-12

1,536 pages

£50

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/108820>

### The Narrative Lectionary Overspill Pack

Issues 13-27 (plus summer extra) in higher quality render

2,082 pages

£60

Purchase through this link: <https://pul.ly/b/207215>

You are downloading a compressed archive of files which need to be unpacked so we recommend downloading these to a desktop or laptop computer rather than phone or tablet. Note that depending on future years there may not be resources for some Sundays depending on the timing of Easter and changes to the readings as a result.

## Using Issue 35

In this issue of Spill the Beans you will find an extensive collection of things to use each week. Because each piece is written with specific congregations in mind there may be the need to be a little creative yourselves in adapting and evolving some of the ideas to suit your own place and culture and congregation. That is entirely purposeful.

Of course, if you are creative and would like to share what you have done, then have a look at our Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/spillbeansresources> and the associated Facebook group that provides space for discussion and support. On our blog at <http://spillbeans.org.uk> you will find PowerPoint backgrounds for most weeks.

Each week we provide a selection of words, ideas and creative moments to take the theme and the passage a little further. We do not provide a ready made service or perfect prayers but ideas and pointers that hopefully scratch at your own creativity and provoke heaven's imagination within you.

Here are some tips to guide your use of the material in age groups:

1. It presumes some introduction to the story will have taken place in worship together or will play a part in the service when children join it later.
2. Depending on the make-up of your own groups of children you will need to remain flexible in how you use the material.
3. Each idea has been given a guide age range to help your planning, but this is only a guide so use your own judgement about what will work with your group.
4. Before the sit-down activities if you have a group of young children or lots of boys, you may want to add a run-around type game to expend some energy.
5. Use the gathering time exercise with the whole group to get into the story together across the ages.
6. We encourage you to retell the story together.
7. Follow that by choosing as many or as few activities your space and time allow. You could offer a number of activities each at different stations all at the same time for all ages to self-select with a teacher staffing each one, or have traditional classes.
8. During activities, ask children to retell the story to you and ask about their week, what was happy and what was sad and if this week's story reminds them of other biblical and personal stories.
9. The intention is not to complete "the tasks" brilliantly, but rather to provide opportunities to begin conversations, build relationships, retell the story of the day, and talk about what it means for us today.
10. There are many websites that provide handout-type sheets that will have images, crosswords and word searches for the story of that week. They can be helpful in an emergency, but try to be more creative as leaders, the rewards are worth it.

## Information

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Sleepless Nights Publications

# contents

Through the Season Notes 4

## Everyone

Sunday 7 June 2020 (Trinity) 6  
 Sunday 14 June 2020 (Pentecost 2) 15  
 Sunday 21 June 2020 (Pentecost 3) 24  
 Sunday 28 June 2020 (Pentecost 4) 34  
 Sunday 5 July 2020 (Pentecost 5) 42

## Seeds

Sunday 12 July 2020 (Pentecost 6) 50  
 Sunday 19 July 2020 (Pentecost 7) 59  
 Sunday 26 July 2020 (Pentecost 8) 68  
 Thursday 2 August 2020 (Pentecost 9) 76

## Stepping Out In Faith

Sunday 9 August 2020 (Pentecost 10) 85  
 Sunday 16 August 2020 (Pentecost 11) 93  
 Sunday 23 August 2020 (Pentecost 12) 102  
 Extra Resources and Activity Sheets 111

Please remember you can use the bookmark system within Adobe Reader to quickly move around this document.

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## Key to Abbreviations

In the worship ideas section the following abbreviations may be used to indicate different sources of worship music:

ATAS	All the Assembly Songs You'll Ever Need
CG	Common Ground
CH4	Church Hymnary, 4th Edition
CH3	Church Hymnary, 3rd Edition
JP	Junior Praise
MP	Complete Mission Praise
SGP	Songs of God's People
WGP	Wild Goose Publications



# through the season

## Introduction

As this issue of Spill the Beans is prepared for publication we are all in lockdown due to COVID-19. The next 12 weeks which this issue covers will mean most of us will be worshipping together but apart, utilising a variety of different ways to encourage each other in worship. We do not know as yet whether people will be able to congregate together by the end of this period though it is currently looking unlikely. The *Through the Season* notes assume that we will be worshipping based at home and not in our church buildings.

You may thus want to adapt these ideas into an online guide for your congregation to follow in their isolation in order to create their own focus each Sunday.

We have in recent weeks created some new rituals, both personal and national: hand washing; mask making; social distancing; walking every day; sharing conversations with neighbours at a safe distance. Some of our friends have been ill, some of us have been ill and in those difficult days other rituals have sprung up. Some have taken to lighting a candle on Sunday night, clapping and making noise on Thursday evenings. The suggestions below are in addition to those ideas: do keep on lighting a candle; and keep on making a noise of support for our key workers.

If you are able, create a special corner at home to be your worship space. It may simply be a table where you can light your candle; there may be space for a laptop so you can sit together to watch online worship; you may make room for your bible or a book of prayers and devotions. Whatever it is, make it a place you go to, to spend time with God.

## Week By Week

### Everyone

#### 7 Jun Trinity/Pentecost 1

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

Title: Always With Us

Activity: This is Trinity Sunday when we celebrate the being of God: Parent, Friend and Advisor; Creator, Brother, Wisdom. Come up with your own three words to play on the characteristics of God, words that describe who God is for you. You might want to create something visual. Place what you come up with on your table space.

#### 14 Jun Pentecost 2

Scripture: Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)

Title: Everyone Has A Part

Activity: We hear of the call to work for the kingdom. In days of lockdown and isolation, in days when we might be making tentative steps back out into the world, consider what you can offer to God. Could it be the work of your hands; the ideas that come to you; the longing you have to share with others: put on the table something that symbolises your work: something you use every day that you can dedicate to God.

#### 21 Jun Pentecost 3

Scripture: Matthew 10:24-39

Title: Everyone Has Value

Activity: The birds of the air and the hairs on your head: God knows every one. You are valued. You are loved. Place a family photo on your table: this may be your immediate family, or those who are like family to you. Name them before God.

#### 28 Jun Pentecost 4

Scripture: Matthew 10:40-42

Title: Everyone Is Welcome

Activity: In more normal times this would be the last week of school for many in Scotland. You may have children in your household, or extended family. There may be children in your neighbours homes: celebrate children and think of ways to help them know they are welcomed by God and by us. If you have children you know by name then write their names down and place them on your table to be named before God.

#### 5 Jul Pentecost 5

Scripture: Matthew 11:16-19,25-30

Title: Everyone Needs Rest

Activity: As July begins, it is nearly four months since people were told to stop going out in order to stay safe. We might be beginning to move again now. Returning to work places and public arenas. If these are indeed days of venturing out again it may seem strange to be thinking about the place of rest for the weary. But we are weary of isolating: weary of not being able to share with friends and family. Name the things that make you weary and write them down or place a symbol representing a new thing you are discovering.

## Seeds

### 12 Jul Pentecost 6

Scripture: Matthew 13:1-9,18-23

Title: Seeds Spreading Good News

Activity: This week begins four weeks of readings where seeds are the focus. As we begin this time, get a packet of salad seeds if you can; take a small tray (one that contained tomatoes is a good size) fill it with compost and sprinkle the seeds thinly over the top. Over the next four weeks, watch your seeds grow, and before long you will have your own crop of leaves to enjoy!

### 19 Jul Pentecost 7

Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30,36-43

Title: Seeds Struggling For Space

Activity: As the seeds begin to grow you may find that they are fighting for space; as you nurture them, you may need to pull a few out to make enough space for the others. But take care! If you are too rough you might pull up too many; or damage the roots of the ones you want to keep.

### 26 Jul Pentecost 8

Scripture: Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

Title: Seeds Giving More

Activity: Keep on caring for those salad seeds; this week's scripture tells us of the mustard seed and the plant that grows from it. Look out a picture of a tree, perhaps one you particularly love or one that has meaning for you. It may be a family tree, or an ornament rather than a physical tree. Think of how that tree carries with it much more than just the trunk and branches, how it carries deep truths for your story too. Place the image of your tree on your table as you give thanks for all the blessings it carries for you.

### 2 Aug Pentecost 9

Scripture: Matthew 14:13-21

Title: Seed Sharing With All

Activity: The final seed story shows how one small gesture can lead to one gigantic blessing. The feeding of the multitude began with a small food offering that is shared into a blessing for everyone as Jesus took that small offering and blessed everyone with more than enough. Take a seeded roll and place it on a plate. With the family gathered around, break it and share together, knowing that from small gestures great blessings will come.



## Stepping Out In Faith

### 9 Aug Pentecost 10

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-33

Title: Stepping Out, Getting Wet

Activity: Our final three weeks of the summer conclude with stories about stepping out in faith. Peter and Jesus stories seems always to have a slight comedic edge, usually because Peter jumps in with both feet and pauses only when he realises what he is doing. Peter panics. Jesus saves him. Peter is faithful. We are often like Peter too: jumping to conclusions; rushing in without taking a moment to plan ahead. Today place a sheet of blue paper on your table; on it write down words that describe a time when you have stepped out in faith and hope.

### 16 Aug Pentecost 11

Scripture: Matthew 15:(10-20),21-28

Title: Stepping Out, Focussing In

Activity: This is usually the week that most schools reopen after the summer break. We pray that indeed it is safe for school to begin; safe for our children to be back with their friends; and that we can meet in our church buildings and gather together again with the whole church family. (If we are back in church) Encourage everyone to bring in a photo from their days of isolation and place them all together on the table.

### 23 Aug Pentecost 12

Scripture: Matthew 16:13-20

Title: Stepping Out, Rocking On

Activity: Simon Peter: the one who knew. The one who not only got things wrong, but also got things right! His recognition of who Jesus was is one instant. His reward was to be given a new name: Peter the Rock. Today you may want to have some smooth river stones that you can give to everyone to take home (if we are back in our churches). Each one could have Jesus written on it on one side, and space for each person's name alongside. Jesus goes with us, knows our name and holds us firm.





trinity / pentecost 1  
sunday 7 june 2020

# always with us

## bible notes

### Graduation Day

It is a tradition in many educational establishments to send off their freshly qualified and newly-minted graduates with a flourish: a ceremony that marks their achievement but also that commissions them for the journey still to come. A part of such a ceremony is often a keynote speaker who will offer some sage advice to those who may have discarded their “L” plates (Learner plates) but are still very much in the early stages of life’s journey. Having spoken recently at such an event, I know that the pressure weighed on me to get the tone right in offering some laughter, some seriousness and lots of encouragement.

The final verses in Matthew’s gospel seem to fulfill a similar objective. However the stakes are, I would suggest, much higher. The newly graduated learners from Jesus’ Academy of the Good News were not just being thrown into a competitive workplace but into a far more threatening environment in which their very being was a challenge to the authority of Rome.

We read that the eleven disciples gathered at a mountain: the scene of so many important events in Jesus’ own life from his temptation to his teaching, healing and feeding, transfiguration and prayer. Only eleven disciples for Judas has hanged himself in his sense of despair at what happened, though one can be assured that many others, especially women, would have also been present. As Jesus appears to them we have the assuring reality that while they worshipped yet still some doubted and questioned what was going on. That certainly has the ring of reality to it as we consider our own faith communities and the mixture of people at different stages in their faith, some filled with doubting questions, others not seeking to question anything, others comfortable that their questions

and wondering are part of their faith. There was a mixed response by those gathered even at that time. Just as there is today to Jesus’ message.

Jesus takes on the authority of God to himself and then offers his keynote address by way of commissioning his graduates. It is short and sweet but also vast in scope, ambition and challenge. That this was to a mere handful of people and yet here we are as those who have benefitted from such a commission is hard to fully comprehend. It worked, albeit with all kinds of fits and starts, wrong turns, misguided paths, and dubious priorities from those who took on power with the Church along the way.

As mentioned above, this was also a clear challenge to the worldly authorities, and contemporaneously to Rome. Livy records Proculus Julius’ declaration that the father of Rome, Romulus, descended from the gods to command, “Go and declare to the Romans the will of Heaven that my Rome shall be the capital of the world so let them cherish the art of war, and let them know and teach their children that no human strength can resist Romans arms.” (*Ad Urbe Condita* 1.16)

Jesus gives an alternative mission to that which Rome had so successfully exported around the known world, from the unlikely lifting off point of rural Galilee Jesus launches a new worldwide movement that embraces all peoples, drawing the whole of creation into the movement. No wonder the early followers of Jesus sought the assurance that Jesus was with them through that challenge to the end of the age. And we seek that same affirmation today in a fast changing and very uncertain time: that Jesus is with us through all of this, encouraging us in that heavenly mission for which Jesus lived, died for, and continues to advocate.

Genesis 1:1-2-4a  
Psalm 8  
2 Corinthians 13:11-13  
**Matthew 28:16-20**

# the story

## Disciples

'Disciples', that's what we were called:  
learners, beginners, pupils, trainees.

Jesus had called twelve of us to be disciples,  
to travel with him, to listen to him,  
watch him, learn from him.

We were an odd mixture of people;  
different occupations, different temperaments,  
different ideas about the world,  
about each other, about God.

But he had taught us well,  
we had learnt to trust God  
to give us hands to heal  
and words to say.

Despite a few fierce arguments  
we had mostly learnt to work together,  
to trust each other,  
to listen and to pray.

And now, at his bidding,  
we were back in Galilee,  
at the top of a mountain.

Eleven of us now,  
for Judas had gone his own way.  
Mountains are special places in our history:  
Noah high and dry on Ararat,  
Moses on Sinai,  
and Jesus had often taught us and many others  
sitting down on a mountainside.

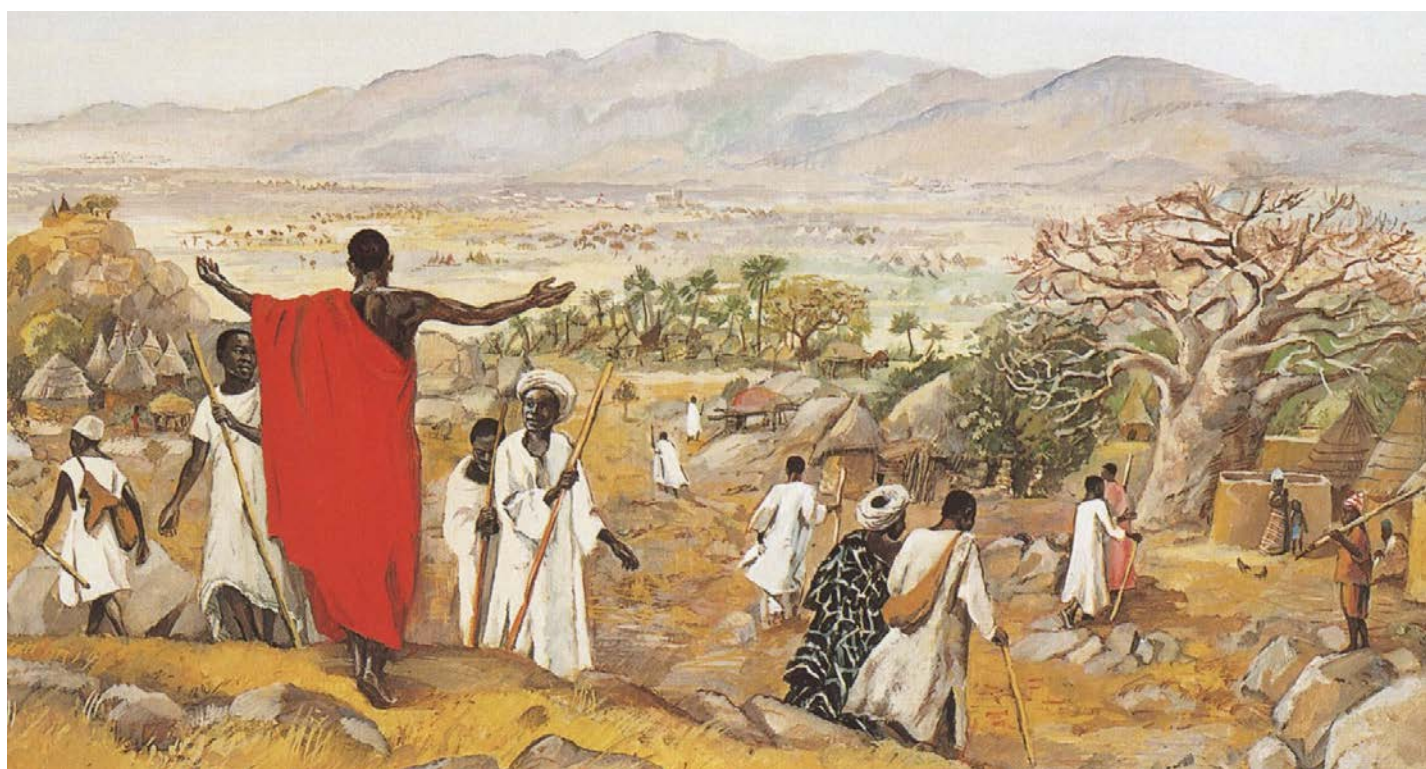
Jesus had recently been crucified  
and buried in a tomb,  
and now he was alive again,  
people had seen him,  
spoken with him,  
and now he was here with us on this mountain.

We met him there as individuals,  
because, although we were all his disciples,  
we were still very different people.  
Some of us wanted to worship him,  
others had doubts and questions  
about what had happened to him,  
and who he was.

And he spoke with us,  
and he told us that it was time for us  
to go and teach people all about him.  
It was time for us to call people  
to be learners and pupils and trainees,  
to call people everywhere to be disciples.  
We were to baptise them  
in the name of God the Father,  
and Jesus and the Holy Spirit.  
We were to teach them,  
as we had been taught,  
to love God with everything they had,  
heart, mind, body, soul, and spirit,  
and to love their neighbours as themselves.

Those were the last things  
that Jesus said to us on the mountain.  
Challenging things, commissioning things,  
words spoken with authority,  
and then he said to us,  
there was something we needed to remember,  
and I always have.

These were his last words,  
they have always helped me and blessed me  
and I share them now with you.  
Jesus said;  
"Remember, I am always with you,  
to the end of time."



The Mission to the World by Jesus Mafa (1973)

# the story

## Retelling For Young People

### Saying Goodbye

Class Three were saying goodbye to their teacher. When they came back after the summer holidays she would not be there. Mrs Young was moving. She was going to teach in a small school on an island in the Hebrides in Scotland.

Class Three were sad. They had enjoyed having Mrs Young as a teacher. They had done exciting projects and she told great stories. She knew that they were all different; that Jimmy had a pet rabbit and didn't like doing sums, and that Fiona loved painting and was learning to play the piano, and that Martin had a new baby sister who was called Emily Jane. She had taught them how to work in pairs and groups, to share their ideas and skills with each other. She had encouraged them to work things out for themselves and to ask for help when they needed it. And she had taught them that it was not the end of the world when you tried something out and it did not work, because that was another way of learning about things.

After the holidays Class Three would be Class Four. There would be a lot of children in the school who would be younger than them. On her last afternoon with them Mrs Young had told Class Three that there was something she wanted to tell them.

Class Three listened. Mrs Young said she was going to ask each of them to tell her and the class one thing that they had learnt this year that they could say or do to help each other and the younger children in the school.

Class Three had lots of ideas. Here are some of them:

- I could sometimes play with the younger ones in the playground.
- I'm good at reading, I could read stories on wet playtimes.
- I can say sorry when I've hurt someone.
- I can bring flowers from my garden for the classroom.
- I could try not to talk so much and listen a bit more.
- I could join the school choir.

Mrs Young smiled. She told Class Three that if they did all these things, they would enjoy being Class Four in the school. She told them that when she had settled in her new home and school, she would write to them, and perhaps they might like to write to her and her new pupils. She would not see them each day but she would still think about them.

Then it was time to say goodbye. There were smiles and tears. And then Class Three went home for their summer holidays.

*Share stories of saying goodbye to teachers, class members, family members, friends.*

*Tell the story of Jesus saying goodbye to his disciples. (Matthew 28:16-20).*

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Remind people that it is Trinity Sunday. Invite people to gather in threes ("Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20).

Whether around the old ideas of a three-leaf clover, or H<sub>2</sub>O coming in the states of solid, liquid and vapour (ice, water, steam), invite them to discuss the words "Trinity" and "Unity" highlighting that the Church has discussed this for centuries so no one is expecting any conclusive answers.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Life-providing God, we gather to praise you.

**All: Receive the humble praise we offer.**

Leader: Lead-giving Christ, we gather to follow you.

**All: Guide us in your ways in our worship.**

Leader: Love-sharing Spirit, we gather to grow.

**All: Nurture our faith this hour.**



## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of all wisdom,  
revealed in scripture and sacrament,  
nature and nuanced learning,  
we are your pupils today and every day;  
disciples like those who followed Christ  
in the early days of ministry.  
Though we live in completely different times,  
in a world that would be unrecognisable  
to bible-era people,  
still your teachings speak in this century too,  
and still, if we learn from you,  
we learn to be better versions of ourselves.

And so we ask for your wisdom to be our wisdom,  
your teachings to teach us your ways,  
your example to be seen in the example  
we set in our daily living.

Of course, Father and Mother of us all,  
we have much to learn.  
Forgive our falling  
and lift us up ready to learn from our mistakes.  
Of course, Rabbi Christ,  
we have still not comprehended all that you taught.  
We confess our slowness to hear and heed.  
Of course, guiding Spirit,  
we too often mistake your voice for our own.  
Have mercy and help us  
to really listen more intently for you.

God of Trinity,  
aid us in our learning  
this Trinity Sunday,  
every Sunday,  
every day.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

Ready, steady, stop!  
Help us all to:  
stop bullying and brutality,  
stop hunger and hurt,  
stop fear and famine.  
Help us all to be ready, and steady, and to stop!

Ready, steady, wait!  
Help us all to:  
Wait for the slower ones amongst us,  
wait for the things we can't yet have,  
wait on your teaching to help us grow.  
Help us all to be ready, and steady, and to wait!

Ready, steady, go!  
Help us all to:  
go and offer kindness,  
go and speak the truth,  
go and be your light,  
help us all to be ready, and steady, and to go  
in the name of Jesus our teacher.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

Often we doubt we have much to give.  
In reality we have so much more  
than so many people do worldwide.  
Keeping better perspective then,  
we offer ourselves once more.

Take our gifts of money.  
Take our gifts of time.  
Take our gifts of service once again.  
Yes, Lord, use even me, much as I have to learn,  
for the sake of your Kingdom's ways.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

This world can make us doubt, God.  
When we see the starving child or the homeless man,  
when we imagine the plight  
of the abused women or the fleeing refugee  
this world can make us doubt, Lord.

This world can make us tired, Lord.  
When news is 24/7 of plight and pain and poverty,  
when leaders say and do  
what we'd reprimand our children for,  
when the needs keep on coming  
and the challenges keep on challenging.  
This world can make us tired, Lord.

What can this world make us learn, Lord?  
When there are naked to be clothed,  
imprisoned who should be free,  
when there are thirsty needing water,  
what can this world make us learn, Lord?

This world can make us love, Lord!  
When the outcast is left isolated,  
when the infirm are forgotten,  
when the anxious are misunderstood,  
this world can make us love, Lord.

Teach us then Father, Son, Spirit.  
Teach us all to go!  
To preach the Good News.  
To be the Good News.  
With love,  
with courage,  
in service.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Reflection

In the beginning  
God gathered God's self together  
to create the universe,  
fashioning with goodness the sky  
with its galaxies and constellations,  
its suns and moons,  
its light and darkness.

And there was some fun and mischief along the way  
as God messed about with incredible light shows  
and sent the planets into orbit  
and played around with tides and seasons  
and day and night.

And then God created the earth  
with its mountains and valleys,  
its oceans and streams,  
its continents separated by vast seas and deserts,  
its forests and ice caps  
and plains of fertile land.

And God enjoyed attending to detail—  
the bumps and the curves,  
the flow from one landscape to the next,  
the separation of water from land  
and earth from sky.

And God loved that beautiful world and wanted to share it.

So God created animals  
for the hills and the plains,  
for the sky and the sea,  
for above and below the earth,  
each with a place and, largely, a purpose.

And then, with a flourish,  
involving dust and breath,  
God created human beings  
who would care for all of creation,  
for all that God had made  
and who would be co-workers with God  
in nurturing and sustaining creation.

God saw that it was good and delighted in all of creation.

As it was in the beginning, so it is now.  
God delights in us.  
Desiring nothing more than relationship,  
Inviting us to be part of  
the divine dance:  
the dance of Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer.

God invites us to be caught up  
in the mystery that is God...

Instead, we spend our time  
trying to unravel that mystery.  
We tie ourselves in knots  
instead of enjoying the different kind of knowing  
that is offered by God;  
we distance ourselves  
rather than entering into relationship;  
we ponder how we can change the world  
when God's invitation is simply to dance...

In that dance we discover compassion  
that moves us to care for creation.  
In that dance we discover anger  
that fuels us to root out injustice.

And, in that dance  
we discover freedom  
made up of Love, Joy,  
Peace, Patience, Goodness,  
Faithfulness, Gentleness,  
the fruits of God-control,  
the elements of the dance  
that sustain the world.  
God's laughter and delight  
and tears and compassion  
form the rhythm that draws us in  
and sends us out  
to dance.

## Reflective Prayer

As I think back over the years  
and all the sermons I may have heard about you, Lord,  
being a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
I conclude I still have much to learn.

Father?

Mother?

Heavenly Parent?

This concept, alone, has much to make me think.

Son?

Of God?

Of Man?

Christ the teacher I still have so much to learn.

Holy Spirit?

Sacred?

Ethereal?

Move in me to reveal your presence.

I may have heard  
and maybe even listened  
through the years.  
Certainly, each day is still a school day  
as I continue to misunderstand.  
Amen.



## Take Home Ideas

Take a piece of paper and create two columns. Title one column 'Certainty' and the second 'Doubt'.

Create two lists: 1) the things in life you are 'certain' about, and 2) the things in life you of which you are 'less sure'. These lists could be a mix of things covering humanity, creation, society, existing observations, and desirable outcomes and so on.

Then discuss with others, or reflect on your own, about how life and existing together in community, usually creates a merging together of certainty and doubt. Think about how this leaves us as followers/disciples of Christ as we consider what God would have us proclaim as 'good' and what he would have us 'work to change'.

## Sending

Go with God's blessing  
to be disciples, and to make disciples.  
Not knowing all the answers,  
not promising to give all the answers;  
but content to know, and confirm to others,  
that God is present,  
in all the mix of certainty and doubt that is human life.

## Praise/Hymns

As a fire is meant for burning	CH4 252
Go forth and tell	MP 178
Go to the world	CH4 683
Jesus Christ is waiting	CH4 360
Jesus' hands were kind hands	CH4 351 / ATAS 143
Lo I am with you to the end of the world	<i>Wild Goose Songs</i> Volume 2
Moved by the Gospel	CH4 247
One more step	ATAS 190 / CH4 530
Out of sight, the Lord has gone	CH4 444
Sent by the Lord am I	CH4 250
There's a light upon the mountains	MP 679
When Jesus saw the fishermen	CH4 340
When the hungry who have nothing	CH4 258
When we are living	CH4 726
You are called	CH4 680
You, Lord, are both lamb and shepherd	CH4 355



# age group ideas

## gathering

Worldwide

all age

*You will need: games that have a world or map theme, such as jigsaws, or flags of the world game (matching flags to countries), around the world version of Twister.*

Play a game with a world or map theme and use this as a way into the story.

## crafts

Journeying Feet

age 3-5

*You will need: A4 card, scissors, pencils, template of footprint, children's socks (used but clean), newspaper torn into strips, PVA glue, glue spreaders, clothes pegs.*

Give each child a sheet of A4 card and ask them to draw around the foot template and then cut out the shape (you might want to have this prepared beforehand). Ask each child to pick a sock and then ask them to scrunch up strips of newspaper and stuff the sock with the newspaper until the sock can be made into a foot shape. Ask the children to spread a layer of glue onto the card foot and then to stick their sock onto the footprint, sole down. A couple of clothes pegs will hold the sock in place while glue dries.

Discuss with the children their favourite socks and different kinds of shoes they have. What kind of shoes would they wear when it's rainy, to the beach, to play running games, in the house and so on? Talk about the story and the disciples being sent out on a journey. What kind of shoes would they have worn? Talk about ways the children can go and share the good news of Jesus.

Travelling Cases

age 6-8

*You will need: boxes in a variety of sizes, photocopied pages from bible and/or copies of today's passage from Matthew's gospel, scissors, PVA glue, glue spreaders, luggage tags, felt tip pens, string, strong tape.*

Ask the children to choose a box each (the box should be sealed closed using strong tape or by attaching lid of box to base of box with strong tape). Ask the children to cover the box with printed sheets by cutting up the sheets and gluing them to all but one of the surfaces of the box. The surface which does not have printed sheets attached becomes the base of the box and so the bottom of the travelling case, allowing the children to continue to work on the box without it sticking to the table! Ask the children to make handles for the travelling case by cutting three lengths of string which they should plait together and attach to 2 sides of the box with strong tape. Ask the children to write a label for the box naming a place or country they would like to travel to. Ask the children to attach the luggage label to the travelling case with strong tape.

Talk about the story of Jesus sending the disciples into

all the world to tell the good news and to make disciples. Discuss with the children ways in which they could share the good news with people around them.

Map Bauble

age 9-12

*You will need: a quantity of smooth white stones, Posca pens or similar pens which can paint on stone.*

Give each child a sheet of printed paper. Ask the children to draw around the circle template 8 times and then to cut out the circles. Ask the children to fold the circles in half—the rulers are helpful here, not only in getting accurate measurements but also to get clean, sharp folds by using rulers to press down on the folded line. Ask the children to glue on the non-printed side of one of the circles and then to stick one half of another circle onto each side, secure with paperclips until glue dries. Continue this process until all pieces are added. Stick a length of ribbon between two of the pieces to give a loop with which the bauble can be hung up.



Talk about places, near and far, the children have travelled to. Talk about the travelling the disciples were about to do. Discuss with the children ways in which they can 'go into all the world and make disciples'. If your congregation has a missionary partner or overseas connection you might want to include that in the discussion. Your writer has a Christian Aid 'Bernie Bear' who visits lots of different countries and writes letters to the children in the church telling them about Christian Aid's work in a country and also including maps, stickers, postcards and activities. See Christian Aid's website for more information.

Into All The World

all age

*You will need: a few maps (street maps of local area, world map), felt tip pens, scissors, coloured card, glue sticks.*

Divide the children into groups of about 4/5 and give each group a map. Ask the children to draw arrows onto the coloured card and then to cut them out (you might want to provide a template for the children to draw around). Ask the children to write their names onto the arrows and to draw some small pictures of feet and suitcases or backpacks onto the arrows. Ask the children to stick the arrows onto the map. Display the posters in your meeting place.

Talk about the story and Jesus sending the disciples into all the world to tell the good news and to make disciples. Discuss with the children ways in which they could share the good news with people around them.



# activities

## What Is A Commission?

age 6-12

*You will need: definitions of the word 'commission' on separate sheets of paper (commission earned by sales people, commissioned to make/do something, bringing something to commission like a heating system, an investigation team), a few false explanations, images of Sistine Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral, copy of commissioned portraits of Queen painted by Nicky Philipps.*

Explore with the children what the term commission means? The English language can be difficult for people to understand as words can have many different meanings. Read out each of the statements and ask the children to try and identify which ones are true and which ones are false. Show some of the images you have of people, buildings, paintings and so on, and talk about people being commissioned to build, design, paint, compose.

'The Great Commission' as today's passage is often described is Jesus is trusting us with the responsibility to pass on the Good news to the people of the world through our words, actions and thoughts. It is a commission that has been going on and passed on for over two thousand years and we are part of that. To be given a commission should make us feel breathless with excitement.

## Three In One

all age

*You will need: three plants in three stages of growth (root, shoot and fruit or images of them).*

Talk about the different stages of growth in the plant from the seed through to the root, shoot and eventual fruit. Change the topic over to ourselves: a baby in mummy's tummy, we are born and grow and learn about Jesus and then we talk about Jesus to others.

Talk about three stages of growth in plants and humans to help the children understand we are still the same people at each stage, and that if we follow Jesus to make more disciples then we can become the fruit, active in the world like the Holy Spirit.

## Divine Dance

all age

*You will need: music to which the children can dance, with different styles.*

Allow the children to try out their dance moves to different music; fast, slow, hip-hop, action songs and so on.

What are the children's favourites? Why? Dancing brings enjoyment and excitement (well, to most people!). When you dance the music moves in and through you and when dancing with others you move in and around each other, sometimes touching, sometimes not. Linking dance to the Trinity we have God—power and majesty, Jesus—love and tenderness, and Holy Spirit—presence and movement. These elements are all involved in dance and in our lives too. Spreading the Good News through dance is another way to spread the word of Christ.

# games

1-2-3

age 3-5

Sitting with the children, start off with everyone counting 1-2-3 on their fingers and then reverse it to 3-2-1 as they drop their fingers. Get a little bit faster and faster. Then change the wording over to Father, Son, Holy Spirit on each finger and then Holy Spirit, Son, Father and once again getting faster each time

It is impossible to explain the trinity to this age group so just get them used to the numbers 1 through 3 and linking them to Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3 In 1

age 6-12

*You will need: a range of objects that you will give the children or let them select from (such as pen, roll of sellotape, paper plate, CD, cup, bottle of water), leave an image of a mouth to be the last item.*

Once each child or group has their items they must come up with three things that their item can be used for and put it into action. For example, a roll of sellotape can be used for securing a package, as a bracelet, or to form a picture frame; a bottle of water can be used as something to drink, as a skittle, as a door stop.

Lots of people do understand the meaning of the Trinity but it really boils down to one thing existing in three different ways. Discuss the uses they came up with together in the larger group and see if there are any additional ideas. Bring out the image of the mouth and get suggestions for what the mouth can be used for, such as talking, singing and whistling! Jesus tells us to go forth and make disciples; well we can do that using our mouths quite easily.

All Over The World

age 6-12

This is similar to the game "Soup" but instead of naming the corners ingredients you name the corners North, South, East and West. The people in the four corners of the world have not heard of Jesus and they need to learn more about who Jesus is. The 'IT' person in the middle calls each corner in whatever order they wish; the children run around the person in the middle and when 'IT' shouts "Jesus is here!" the children scatter back to their original corners while the 'IT' tries to catch them. Each person caught joins the person in the middle trying to catch the others on the next attempt. Once all the children are caught the last person starts the game over.

It is good to talk about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit to people who have not heard anything about them. Jesus gave us this commission to help spread the word.

# discussion starters for teens

## go, make disciples



### Preparation

Have a piece of paper and something to write with for everyone. And if you want to ask people to show off their skills then you could ask them to prepare in advance.

### Opening Activity

#### Ambidextrous?

Ask the young people to try to write out Matthew 28:19 with their non-dominant hand.

*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

- How successful were you in writing out the verse?
- How did it feel to be writing with a different hand?

### The Word

Read Matthew 28:16-20 together.

### Activity/Discussion

If anyone wants to display a particular skill, this would be the time to do it.

- What's the thing you are best at?
- How did you get good at it?
- Have you always been able to do it?
- Did anyone help you to learn?

- Think back to trying to write with your other hand; do you think if you spent enough time practicing your writing would get better?

Have a look back at the story today... Remember, this is after Easter, after the resurrection, when the disciples meet Jesus again.

- How do you think the disciples would be feeling?

Verse 17 tells us that they worshipped Jesus but some doubted. That is a very important little comment.

- How do you think you would have felt?

Look at what Jesus asks them to do in verse 19, as you wrote in your non-dominant hand earlier.

- How do you think they felt about that?

Jesus asks us, his followers now, to do the same thing!

- How do you feel about that?
- How do we make disciples?
- How does it feel to know Jesus is always with us?
- Does it sometimes feel uncomfortable to do that?
- How confident are we to share what we know about Jesus?

### Living It Out

When you are speaking to someone or posting something as social media, consider whether what you say helps people to get to know Jesus.





pentecost 2  
sunday 14 june 2020

# everyone has a part

## bible notes

Genesis 18:1-15 (21:1-7)

Psalm 116:1-2,12-19

Romans 5:1-8

**Matthew 9:35-10:8(9-23)**

### Division, Coronaviruses, and Compassion

In every age, in every community we find, if we look well enough, a division amongst the leadership or members of that community about the priorities of their work or the key tenets of their belief or the level of power wielded by their leaders. Some despotic regimes may disguise that division under a blanket of patriotic propaganda, but if the surface is scratched those divisions will likely soon appear.

We see that kind of scratching below the surface going on here in Matthew's gospel in the transition from one section of the book to another: from a section recording the miraculous work of Jesus to one in which he is commissioning his closest followers to go and do likewise. The undercurrent is one of resistance between the Pharisees (whom Matthew picks out in particular as totemic of the conservatism of a culture that could not cope with Jesus' alternative way of doing things) and Jesus' alternative group of activists.

The preceding two chapters have set up this alternative way, and the inherent challenge it brought to the establishment. Their leadership is castigated as Jesus laments with compassion the plight of the crowds who have no shepherd to lead them, leaving them harassed and helpless. This is rural metaphor at work and any farmer of livestock will know that sense of anguish when they realise the animals under their protection have been left vulnerable: a gate left open, a predator run amok, a contagious disease running rampant through the flock.

At the time of writing these notes most of the world is in lockdown as a result of the spread of SARS-CoV-2 which causes COVID-19 in many people. Where unchecked by stringent hygiene, protective measures, testing and contact tracing, the disease can rapidly spread through communities. The responses to this disease have also caused division between those who want to try to overcome the disease as quickly as possible and those who want to avail themselves of their liberties.

In the UK this has also been accompanied by a new ritual each Thursday evening by which many offer their thanks to those working in health and caring sectors, in particular. Many of the people working in those professions are putting their lives on the line in order to carry out their calling. They are paying a heavy cost in terms of the risks to their own health and that of their families. And this is going on amongst a robust debate about the establishment's resourcing of health services and whether they are doing all they can to protect staff on the front line.

Perhaps this modern context helps to frame the sense amongst the community to which Matthew was writing and gives focus to the sense of anguish and worry, the costliness of serving a community through bringing healing and wholeness that the disciples and their later followers experienced. Doing the right thing can cause division and be extremely costly. It can reveal the lack of compassion of some in comparison to the overwhelming compassion of others.

Whereas the first block of Jesus' teaching in Matthew, the Sermon on the Mount, was directed at a wider group, this teaching is only directed at the twelve disciples. This is more focused teaching about what discipleship means, about the cost of following Jesus' way, and the likely challenges that it may rouse from other people. Here Jesus is giving a model to the church. We note that the disciples do not go out alone. They go out as a mutually supportive group bound by the bonds of their shared ministry to go and do as Jesus did.

What have we made discipleship today with our countless courses and studies? What seriousness do we give to the instruction of Jesus to travel lightly and expect no reward? What if our compassionate actions stir division?

# the story

## What Would We Feel?

*To follow the gospel reading.*

I sometimes wonder what it would have been like to be one of those first disciples of Jesus. What it would be like to be with him every day, hearing him preach and teach, watching him heal people? What was it like to depend upon others for food and shelter?

I wonder how the disciples felt when he sent them out among the villages. Maybe people in the villages would have known them, wondered why they had left their homes and their jobs to be with Jesus, perhaps laughed at them when they talked about the Kingdom of God. How vulnerable did those disciples feel without food, or money, or spare clothing? How did it feel to be asked to heal people? As they quickly found out, being a follower of Jesus was not safe or easy.

And fast forward a bit, to the early church. The people then knew what had happened to Jesus because of how he had lived and taught. They knew about the resurrection, but they also knew what preceded it. And through the letters of Paul and the stories being recorded by the Gospel writers, they were hearing clearly the consequences of discipleship. Being hated by their families and handed over to governors were for many of them daily realities.

Throughout history, people who have become followers of Jesus, have been involved in wars and suffering and controversy. They have often been persecuted. And today in many parts of the world Christian communities are experiencing danger and fear and persecution.

- So in our community, in our church, what does this reading say to us: is it good news or bad news?
- Are parts of this reading relevant only to the early church?
- Where do we see the Kingdom among us?
- Is being a Christian difficult in our community?
- How do we support Christians in other communities who are having a harder time than we are?
- Just how wise and how innocent are we?

## Retelling For Young People

### Learners

Jesus was a teacher and his friends were learners. Sometimes we call them disciples or followers or apostles. All of our lives we are learners because there is always something new to find out.

- Can you think of something new that you found out about this week?

There are different ways of learning things. You can watch someone working or listen to someone talking. You can use Google.

- Can you think of any other ways?

Jesus taught people in lots of different ways. One way that people really enjoyed was that he told stories—stories about things they saw everyday—seeds, flowers, sheep, coins. Another way that Jesus taught was that he did kind things and encouraged his friends to do the same. He talked to people who other people avoided, people who were poor or sick or sad.

- Which story that Jesus told do you like best and why?

Another way that Jesus taught was to do something and then get his friends to do the same. Sometimes he sent them out on their own to tell people about God and to heal people. He told them that God would help them to do these things.

- There's an old saying: Practice makes perfect. Can you work out what that saying means?

Tell us about something that you have had to practice.

The bible is a book full of different poems and stories and letters, reading it helps all of us, children and grown-ups, to learn more about God.



# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

*The Harvest is plenty, but the workers are few.*

Provide everyone with a pumpkin seed on arrival. As people individually prepare for worship, invite them to hold the seed in their hand, looking at it, feeling its texture in their fingers and imagining in their mind how large fruits slowly grow from such small beginnings given the right conditions and nurture. How might our faith that is the size of a mustard seed grow and what is the task at hand for we who are called to gather in the Christ's harvest?

## Call to Worship

Leader: Back then there was the twelve.  
Here and now there is us.

**All: We are your disciples today  
and today we gather to worship you.**

Leader: Back then they followed you in the flesh.  
Today we follow in your Spirit.

**All: We are your disciples  
and today we gather to follow you.**

Leader: Back then there were but a few.  
Today we, numbering billions,  
are part of a worldwide Church.

**All: We are your disciples today  
and today we gather to serve you.**

## All-Age Prayer

Lord Jesus,  
you call us to follow  
in your footsteps,  
to live a life of love;  
by serving our neighbours,  
by being kind,  
by being generous,  
by welcoming people,  
by forgiving those who hurt us.

You did this  
when you lived on the earth,  
you have shown us  
by your example and  
now you ask us  
to do the same.  
It is hard Lord,  
but we promise to try.

Help us Lord Jesus  
to be more like you.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Discipling God,  
we are made in your image and  
called to follow your Son, Jesus, the risen Christ.  
We are to be like him in every way, even unto death.  
Lord, this is scary stuff, help us.

Along with our brothers and sisters around the world,  
we gather to offer this time of worship,  
to acknowledge your love for us, revealed in Jesus.

In these strange days,  
our gatherings are very different,  
apart and yet united by our love for you.

Even today the harvest is large,  
many people seeking to find you  
amid this global pandemic and  
the fears and anxieties it holds  
for each one of us.

We are discovering new ways to engage with people  
and we are grateful for the wonder of technology  
that allows us to reach out to people  
in our communities and beyond.

Forgive us, Lord, when we fail you,  
when we choose our own way instead of yours.

Forgive us, Lord, for our frailties,  
help us move forward determined to be  
more like the people you created us to be,  
using our gifts and talents  
for the work of your kingdom,  
here and now.

Lord Jesus, you have shown us the way to live,  
the way to behave, help us to want to be more like you.

In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

Lord Jesus you gave your life that  
we might know the full extent  
of God's love for all creation.

Today, we offer our very selves,  
all that we are, all that we can be,  
with your help.

Receive all that we offer,  
time, talents, money,  
take and use it all for your glory.  
Amen.



# worship ideas

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

God of compassion,  
in a world in which we sometimes struggle  
to understand what it might mean today  
to have a plentiful harvest,  
but know all too well what it means  
to have few labourers,  
we bring our prayers for other people  
and our prayers for ourselves  
as a community of faith,  
endeavouring to live out our commitment  
as your disciples.

We pray for all those who feel  
the weight of oppression and persecution  
in their lives individually and as a community;  
may they know a sense of belonging  
and may we speak up  
to confront injustice wherever  
and however we find it.

We pray for all those who are grieving  
a loss of someone special to them,  
and who sense so viscerally  
the division and isolation that loss can bring;  
may they know your comforting presence  
and may we open our hearts  
in whatever way we can  
to be a supportive friend.

We pray for all those who worry  
and know the struggle that the next  
months and years will be for them,  
with less income and greater costs,  
with job insecurity and fewer opportunities;  
may they know your steadfast companionship  
and may we be generous  
in our solidarity.

We pray for all those whose labour  
is not recognised or appreciated,  
and those who feel they have been excluded  
from the riches and opportunities  
that have blessed others;  
may they demand recognition  
and may we stand with all those  
whom others seek to make scapegoats.

We pray for all those in positions of leadership  
with difficult decisions to make  
and responsibilities to heed;  
may they be guided by a spirit of duty to all,  
and with a clarity of thought  
that will help them navigate  
competing demands,  
and may we be supportive and questioning,  
generous and honest.

Hear our prayers, Lord God,  
offered in your name.  
Amen.

## Reflection

Sometimes...  
often...  
we need one more sign;  
one more word of reassurance,  
one more affirmation,  
one more marker by which to gauge  
the evidence of God at work.

It's not so much  
that we are unconvinced  
by the evidence all around.

It's not that we doubt the presence  
and the leading of God.

But we question our own preparedness,  
our own competence,  
our own suitability  
for the task that lies ahead.

We know that God is faithful.  
The question is: are we?  
Are we up to the task  
of stepping into the unknown;  
ill-equipped,  
under-resourced,  
inexperienced?

And if, by some amazing quirk  
others should journey with us,  
can we keep our nerve,  
remain resolute along the way?

Are we able to keep on discerning  
and to follow the prompts revealed?

Are we able to bear the burden  
of those who will grumble  
when we cannot chart the territory  
or the fear of those  
who see no need to change direction,  
or the scorn of those for whom  
the old ways are working just fine?

Do we have the resilience it will take  
to weather the saboteurs,  
not least the doubts and fears within us  
that whisper that we're not fit for the journey?

May the God of infinite wisdom and patience  
give us one more sign  
against all the odds  
that we are called to this journey now  
in faith, in hope  
and in love.

We are called to step out  
with the God of mission  
who maps out a new path  
and calls us to journey alongside,  
and who grounds and resources us  
from the depths  
showing us in ancient stories  
the way to God's promised future  
one step, one sign at a time.

## Take Home Ideas

In 2019, 'Open Door UK' the charity monitoring the places around the world where Christians are persecuted, rated these countries as the most dangerous:

1. North Korea
2. Afghanistan
3. Somalia
4. Libya
5. Pakistan
6. Sudan
7. Eritrea
8. Yemen
9. Iran
10. India
11. Syria

Check out <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/> and read about current persecution. Consider how hard faith and discipleship might be in these places.

Matthew's Gospel is a particular community's reflections, over two generations, into how belief, faith and discipleship can be expressed and lived out within the circumstances of their time. In the light of what it means to be a Christian in the persecuted places of the world today, and a Christian in Matthew's community of old, consider the challenge and opportunity we know in doing so in our society and world today.

## Sending

God, help us shake the dust off our feet,  
and go into the world with a spirit of healing love.  
Faith, belief and discipleship are to be lived out.

May we, your followers in this generation,  
go to meet our world:  
with your blessing,  
with the example of Jesus ever before us,  
and the energy of the Spirit driving us.

## Praise/Hymns

As a fire is meant for burning	CH4 252
Follow me, follow me	ATAS 63
Go forth and tell	MP 178
I want Jesus to walk with me	CH4 539
Jesus calls us here to meet him	CH4 510
Jesus calls us o'er the tumult	CH4 509 / MP 359
Jesus' hands were kind hands	CH4 351
Lord you sometimes work in wonders	CH4 606
Sisters and brothers with one voice	<i>Known/Unknowns,</i> WGP, 67
The church is wherever God's people are praising	CH4 522
We're on this road	<i>We're On This Road,</i> Fischy Music
When God Almighty came to earth	<i>Known/Unknowns,</i> WGP, 90
When Jesus saw the fishermen	CH4 340
Will you come and follow me	CH4 533



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Bring Me

all age

*You will need: a variety of different objects with different numbers of each, spread around your meeting place.*

Ask the children to work either in teams or as individuals to bring you a certain number of a particular item, such as one left shoe, two socks, one toy, three sheets of paper. Make sure you include at least one example where they are looking for twelve such as twelve pencils (if you have a safe outdoor area and it is nice weather, this would add more scope such as twelve blades of grass). Use this as an introduction to the twelve disciples being named and sent.

## crafts

### Twelve Disciples Lollipop Sticks

age 3-8

*You will need: wooden craft sticks (twelve per child), felt tip pens, small pieces of felt, scissors, PVA glue, glue spreaders, scraps of wool and/or embroidery thread, plasticine or play dough, paper plate.*

Give each child a tray and ask them to cover the inside of it with glue. Get them to now spread a layer of sand onto the glue and then to stick their stones into place on top of the sand to create their desert scene.

Talk about deserts with the children and what they can be like, for example very hot during the day and sometimes extremely cold at night. Talk about how they would feel if they had to go into a desert. Talk about Jesus going into the desert for forty days and forty nights and discuss with the children what they think Jesus might have felt like during that time.

### Name Badges

age 9-12

*You will need: badge making machine (to hire or borrow along with component parts for making badges), or badge making kits (available from Baker Ross or other similar craft suppliers), felt tip pens, small stickers.*

Follow the instructions to make badges. Ask the children to include their name in their design.

Talk about the story and the names of the twelve disciples, chosen and sent out. Discuss with the children people they know who are Christian leaders today in your own church, local community and wider world. Discuss with the children how each one of us is called to be a disciple and sent out into the world with the good news. How do they feel about that? What sort of things could they do?

### Team Picture

all age

*You will need: A4 paper, crayons, felt tip pens, glue sticks, collage material, scissors, frieze paper or lining paper.*

Give each child a sheet of A4 paper and ask them to draw a self portrait (head and shoulders) using materials provided. Encourage the children to use the full size of the paper rather than draw a very small face in the centre of the page. Ask the children to cut out their picture and then to stick them on the frieze or lining paper. Write the words "We are a team" or "We are Jesus' disciples" or whatever your group thinks appropriate for themselves along the top or bottom of the poster.

Talk about the story. Talk with the children about how we are all called to be part of a team, working with each other to tell the good news of Jesus. Discuss with the children the different roles/workers in the church and how they can contribute, participate and lead.





# activities

## Who Helps Us?

age 3-5

*You will need: dressing up clothes, an associated item and/or images of people who help children (teachers, doctors, nurses, dentists, parents, police, fire and ambulance, minister).*

Allow the children to dress up in the clothes they want and then act out what that role does. If using associated items or images hold up an image for the children to identify and ask them what the person related to that object or looking like the person in the picture does in that job. What would the children like to be when they grow up?

Jesus helped lots of people who were ill and sick and he also listened to what they were saying. We need to help others: how can we help our parents? Our school friends?

## Workers In Your Church

age 6-12

*You will need: paper and pencils for everyone and a list of questions for the children to ask (such as: Why do you help out in our Sunday School? Do you have any other roles in the church and if so what are they and why do you do it? Are you employed in another job? Do you talk about church or your faith there? Are you a member of any organisations or clubs and if so what are they and do you talk about your church/faith there?).*

Ask the children to list the leaders and helpers in your Sunday school. The children can then ask the leaders your prescribed questions and find out the answers.

The workers are few, Jesus says, and to be a worker we need to talk about Jesus. That is what the disciples did. Ask the children if they talk about church, Jesus or Sunday School when they are with friends or family? Explain that there are lots and lots of children and adults out there who know nothing about Jesus or the bible.

## Who Needs Our Help?

age 6-12

*You will need: images and information about the needs in your own area (poverty, homelessness, mental well-being, loneliness, addictions, for instance).*

Ask the children if they have ever helped anyone. Then turn it around: has anyone ever helped them? Ask the children to name some occupations where the people in these roles help others (such as doctors, nurses, police officers, fire officers, paramedics, social workers, teachers, ministers). Do the children have any idea of the needs in their own area? In their school? After listening to the responses show the images and discuss a couple of the areas of need you have highlighted asking how we can as people of faith help others in these areas? Make up a plan and put it into action.

Jesus realised that there were a great many people needing his help and wanting to listen to what he was saying but he could not do it all alone so he got his disciples to be his helpers. We are Jesus' helpers today.

## The Work Party

all age

*You will need: party food from each child (ask the week before), cleaning equipment (brushes, dusters, clothes, boxes to tidy things away).*

You will need to ask the children the week before to bring in some food for a work party. It is up to each family what they bring in., but suggest they keep it simple and affordable. On the day, they keep their food in their bag to begin with. As they arrive, inform the children that your room/hall needs to be cleaned from top to bottom, dusted, swept, tidied up. Nominate just a couple of children to do the work while the rest of you just watch or start to play a game. There is no way they are going to get it done so everybody needs to help by doing something. You then bring out a packet of biscuits and a jug of water and say this is the food for everyone in the work party—there is not enough—so you ask for more food that the children brought. Then you have plenty.



When Jesus told this story was he talking about helping others clean or having lots of food to eat? No, he was talking about us going out to other people and telling them about God and Jesus. Lots of people in our areas have not heard about Jesus and what it means to follow him so we need to help Jesus by talking to others about him and God. There are not many of us but there are lots of people who have not heard or understood about God.

# age group ideas

## games

### Story Mime

As you go through this week's bible story ask the children to act out each part.

Jesus travelled around (walk around), teaching in the synagogues (hold hands like a book), telling people the good news (point to mouth), about the kingdom of heaven (point up), and caring for the sick (stroke arm). He looked at the people (hand above eyes and looking out) and felt sorry for them (aww!) because they were like sheep without a shepherd ('baa').

He sent the disciples out (point), to find the lost sheep (put both hands out and signal to come closer).

When we get lost we hope someone will be on hand to help us find our way. Sheep rely on their shepherds to take care of them and get them from here to there, but who helps to look after us? As well as our family Jesus is looking out for us also.

### Help! Help!

*You will need: play parachute.*

Play the parachute game 'Sharks' where one child is nominated as the shark and goes under the parachute. All the other children sit around the edge of the parachute with their legs under the parachute. Two children are standing outside the parachute as lifeguards and as the shark tries to pull the children under, they rush to help the victim.



Keep a close eye on the children so that no one is being too rough. This can get very exciting.

We rely on so many people to help us when we are in need. Lots of people do not realise that they need Jesus in their lives so it is up to us to help Jesus by reaching these people and telling them about Jesus and what it means to follow him.

### age 3-5

### What Do I Need?

*You will need: a large bag or suitcase for each team filled with some of the following items: lunch box, hat, gloves, purse/wallet, rucksack, hand wipes, bottled water, bible/book, sun cream, sun hat, toothpaste, tooth brush, pen, sweets, crisps, toy, pack of cards, diary.*

Split the children into teams for a relay race. Tell them they are going on a summer holiday to Italy and get them to think about what will they need from the suitcase.

Each person takes a turn to run to the case and select something. At the end they get one point for each correct item and one point deducted for every wrong item. Do it again, but this time make it a holiday to Iceland in the winter. The next time a business trip. Lastly ask them to think about what the disciples would have taken with them.

The disciples went out talking about Jesus and his message with very few possessions. What would we need to take with us if we wanted to talk to others about Jesus if we were at school? At our club? Where else could we talk about Jesus?

### Help!

### all age

Play any game that involves one person as 'IT'. Examples could be the various forms of Tag, Soup, Clock in the Tower, Bear in the Honey Pot.

Whoever is 'IT' can struggle to catch people so give the game a twist where whoever is 'IT' can nominate another two, three or four people to help them.

You could time each game to compare how more quickly the task is complete when you start with some help.

Doing some things on our own can be very difficult so we need others to help us just like Jesus needed his disciples to help him.



# discussion starters for teens

## journeying with jesus

### Preparation

Gather or print some holiday brochures or photos of far off places to set the scene. Pens and paper with which to make a list.

### Opening Activity

#### Bon Voyage!

Talk about favourite places that the young people have either been to or dream of visiting at some point in their lives.

- Why is this place a favourite for you?
- What attracts you to it?
- Who would you want to go with you to visit it?

Then turn everyone's thoughts to what they would need to go and visit the place they have suggested.

- What would you need to pack for a week away at your favourite place?

Let the young people spend some time creating a list of what they would take with them.

Once they have done that then challenge them to discard all but five of the items they had decided to take with them.

- What would you keep in your travelling bag?
- Why did those objects make it, but not the others?

### The Word

Read together Matthew 9:35-10:4.

### Activity/Discussion

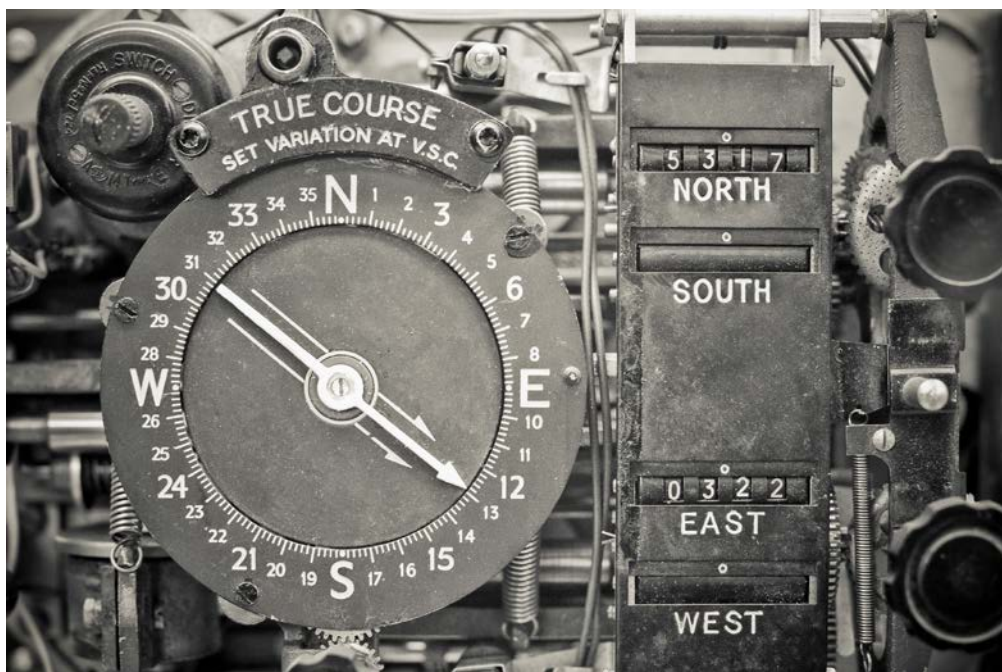
The disciples were chosen by Jesus.

- What skills and attributes do you think a good disciple would have?

Now read Matthew 10:5-14.

Verses 7-10 look a bit like a job description for being a disciple of Jesus.

- Were any of these things on your list of things a good disciple should be able to do?
- How would you feel about being told to go and do this stuff?
- And what about the terms and conditions? No pay? Not even allowed to take spare clothes?



It seems like Jesus knows some people will not like what the disciples will have to say when they go out to speak to people about Jesus.

- Why do you think some people are not interested in Jesus and what he talked about?
- What do you think spreading the Good News looks like these days?
- How can we get involved?
- What skills would you bring to the job?
- What proportion would you give to the words you use or the actions you take?

### Living It Out

Check out the news this week.

- How much of it is Good News?
- Could you help spread some good news?





pentecost 3  
sunday 21 june 2020

# everyone has value

## bible notes

Genesis 21:8-21  
Psalm 86:1-10,16-17  
Romans 6:1b-11  
**Matthew 10:24-39**

### Developing Ethics

**O** Happy Day! Here's a passage that seems full of cost and choice and either it is of great cost or impossible choice. Such passages have been used and abused by folk to gain control over others. You can hear these texts on the lips of leaders using guilt and fear to persuade folk to do things for them rather than a leadership that models love in action.

Yet Jesus speaks of coming not with peace but with a sword. So many debates have raged over the gospel being used to justify violence; the Gospel has hard choices and we have to make them at times. However, this is not necessarily what is being said.

The verb used means 'cast as sword' as in casting seed. Jesus speaks of casting out demons or casting workers into the harvest field. So the sense is that of a sword divides rather than a weapon. Jesus is suggesting his words can divide people, cast one from another.

This then reflects on what happens within households. It has to be recognised, however, that all the difficult household relationships mentioned in this passage with one person against another are to be taken as extreme examples. They are unusual situations. The norm would be for the household to be together, a clear tradition in the New Testament and Old: households remain together. There are examples of this in the stories of Abraham and Isaac or Ruth and Naomi. There are also examples of when that is not the case such as Saul and Jonathon, but the point of these stories is that they are extreme. So the examples here are peculiar and unusual. These are not everyday occurrences and should not be expected to be everyday occurrences.

The passage concludes with the phrase about taking up the cross. This seems a bit out of sync as Jesus has yet

to be crucified. It feels like this has been added into the text later, or that Matthew, writing from the perspective of the post-resurrection years, has placed it here to help his own community understand a situation happening to them. Perhaps they are experiencing persecution, or that there is division between the Jewish traditions and the growing Christian traditions.

Matthew may be exploring through his gospel a situation that is a reality for his small and new community: families who are facing the choice between following this new version of the faith called Christianity, or keeping to the longer and older traditions of Judaism.

Yet how relevant these phrases still feel in the church today. How many folk feel themselves in the same situation because of sexuality, lifestyle, culture, age, gender, all causing division? This is less within households but within the church itself. How does it feel to be on the margins of the church and being placed there by the church itself?

There is almost a procedural approach to conflict in this passage. Christianity is new at this time. It is developing its own rules and ethics here. It can feel quite prescriptive as there is no great body of wisdom to draw on unlike the much older tradition of Judaism using deep and multilayered stories to explore such situations. The stories of Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathon, Esau and Jacob and others create a richer and deeper ethic than the cold hard facts of Matthew.

There is more grace and redemption found in using stories to shape our reality, more space to grow in wisdom and hope, yet our faith communities today, perhaps once more feeling fragile, often let the sword against peace ethic dominate.

# the story

## Shout From The Rooftops

- Andy: (Shouting loudly) JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, HALLELUJAH!
- Ada: Andy, what are you doing?
- Andy: I am shouting for Jesus.
- Ada: Why are you shouting for Jesus?
- Andy: Well I am practicing, because I want to ask the minister if I can climb up the tower and shout "Jesus" from there!
- Ada: You want to ask the minister what?
- Andy: If I can shout the name of Jesus from the rooftops.
- Ada: Why would you want to do that, Andy?
- Andy: It's in the Bible!
- Ada: There are a lot of things in the Bible, Andy, that you don't do, so why do you want to shout it from the rooftops?
- Andy: Well, I have a big loud voice and think I could be good at that. Or I could get a megaphone and that would make me louder, or maybe we could link up some speakers and broadcast it all over Paisley...!
- Ada: Hold on there, Andy. You are getting a bit carried away with this idea, but you are still not making sense. Why do you want to shout from the rooftops?
- Andy: Well it was probably what folk did in those pre-TV and internet days. They climbed up onto the roofs and shouted to one another. So, I was thinking that as part of our church mission strategy we should go back to basics. "C'MON JESUS!" You know, shout his name from the rooftops, it would probably get folks' attention.
- Ada: Andy, I think it could also mean you getting detention in a police cell for disturbing the peace!
- Andy: Och, Ada, they wouldn't do that... would they?
- Ada: They may well lock you up, Andy... for your own safety of course!
- Andy: Oh, I don't fancy spending time in the cells, Ada.
- Ada: Best not go up the tower then and let's not bother the minister or the Kirk Session with that suggestion.
- Andy: Oh, Ada, sometimes it's so hard following Jesus. No wonder the disciples got confused sometimes. In our reading today Jesus is bombarding them with bits of teaching, and they are struggling to keep up.
- Ada: Yes, Andy, it's a hard passage to get your head around. It poses lots of images of conflict, as though there was a simple answer every time. Yet I think what Jesus is suggesting to his followers, is that there are hard choices to be made every day in the way we live our lives and choose to follow Jesus.
- Andy: You can say that again, Ada.
- Ada: Well I'd rather not, Andy, like Jesus I wish folk would take on board the decisions they need to make for themselves, in the knowledge that God himself seeks to support us in the decisions we make. Even if those decisions are wrong, he hopes that we can learn from them.
- Andy: These are some pretty hard choices, Ada, and sometimes these choices lead to conflict with our family, our friends and even our fellow Christians who might see life differently.
- Ada: Exactly, Andy.
- Andy: The way Jesus is talking here is as though everyone is out to get us?
- Ada: It seems that way, but there are also words of encouragement here reminding us that we are valuable in the sight of God, and that he knows everything there is to know about us, even the number of hairs there are on our heads, although in your case, Andy, that would be much fewer than you used to have!
- Andy: Now, Ada, let's not get personal!
- Ada: Sorry, Andy. Jesus is talking plainly, and he does not hold back telling his followers the challenges that lie ahead, yet he assures them and us that whatever we face he is with us and is looking out for us in these hard times and we should never lose sight of that.
- Andy: Ada, you have really reassured me, and helped me make sense of what Jesus was saying. I'm sure you have helped lots of people today and given them some encouragement and hope.
- Ada: Thank you, Andy, but I think you'll find that Jesus is the one who brings encouragement and hope, and that he simply invites us to be his agents and his hands to carry out his work
- Andy: "WELL DONE, ADA!" (using megaphone)
- Ada: Andy!

# the story

## Retelling For Young People

### Following Jesus

I had a busy day, a stressful day, a frustrating day, and so I crept into the sanctuary and sat on the front pew just wanting a little of me and God time. No phones ringing, nobody asking me any questions, nobody telling me any stories, nobody asking for a reply to their email or text. This is a people free zone and a mobile phone free zone. I was just beginning to relax when I heard a tiny voice.

"Pssst! Meenister!"

"WHAT?" I shouted out loudly, scaring poor Mitchell out of his skin. I heard him scampering back to his little house and felt very guilty.

I sat there, for a few moments and then spoke gently: "Mitchell, I am really sorry that I shouted. I just wanted a few minutes with God on my own."

I could hear Mitchell sniffing, and I think he might have been crying, and that just made me feel worse. So, I said softly, "Mitchell, I am so, so sorry, please come out and speak to me!"

Mitchell emerged slowly from his little mouse hole and made his way across the chancel onto the step next to the baptismal font. He looked at me and said: "You are a grumpy Meenister today?"

"Yes, Mitchell, I'm sorry, it has been a long day, and I am tired and grumpy!"

"Well I guess we all get that way sometimes Meenister? You did scare me with your shouting, you never normally shout."

"Oh Mitchell, I know I shouldn't be shouting because that doesn't help anyone."

"Just forget about it, Meenister, and move on. I think that is what Jesus would want you to do?"

"Oh, so you are a theological mouse now, Mitchell?"

"Well I have listened to you often enough to know that Jesus told us not to worry or get upset."

"Maybe you should go into the pulpit this week and squeak to the people, Mitchell?"

"Nae chance, Meenister, that is your job!"

"Sometimes it's really hard, Mitchell, to get up there and tell people about Jesus. I worry that I don't do a very good

job of it, and some passages are harder than others to explain to folk so they can understand it."

"Like what, Meenister?"

"Well this week our bible reading is from Matthew 10, verses 24-39. Jesus is chatting to his disciples about the opposition they will face from their families and friends. He is saying how hard it is to speak the truth of God, and that Jesus himself will cause divisions. Not one of those 'nice wee love and peace messages' Mitchell."

"Oh Meenister, I understand how hard that must be, but is Jesus not also offering words of encouragement and reassurance that folk will get through these hard times and better times will come. The truth of God will get out there regardless of how hard life is, and that he thinks we are all valuable and important people, because we have chosen to follow Jesus!"



"Do you know, Mitchell, I think you might be on to something. Maybe I should stop worrying about getting it right or making it a perfect sermon. I should really just tell people that God cares for them no matter what they are going through, and if they continue to follow Jesus, they will get there in the end."

"Glad to help you, Meenister. You don't sound grumpy anymore."

"No Mitchell, I think you just taught me a valuable lesson, just like Jesus did to his disciples when they were worried."

"No bother Meenister. Happy to be a theological little mouse!"

And after that we just sat enjoying each other's company until it was time for supper.



# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

There are several phrases in this morning's gospel reading that could be called, "Memory verses". Invite people to read Matthew 10:24-39 and choose just one of the phrases that stand out to them. Ask people to read the phrase then read it and read it again and to try to learn it by heart, including the reference.

## Call to Worship

Leader: "The student is not above the teacher,  
nor a servant above his master."

**All: We are here to learn of Christ's ways.**

Leader: "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?  
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground  
outside your Father's care."

**All: We are here in gratitude for all God's care.**

Leader: "Whoever finds their life will lose it,  
and whoever loses their life for my sake  
will find it."

**All: We are here to find ourselves  
by losing ourselves in worship.**

## All-Age Prayer

Leader: The hungry and the homeless,  
the hurting and the habitual.

**All: All are welcome in this place.  
All are welcome through Jesus our friend.**

Leader: The lost and the lonely,  
the lazy and the labourer.

**All: All are welcome in this place.  
All are welcome through Jesus our friend.**

Leader: The angry and the affable,  
the affectionate and the aggressive.

**All: All are welcome in this place.  
All are welcome through Jesus our friend.**

Leader: The grumpy and the gracious,  
the greedy and the generous.

**All: All are welcome in this place.  
All are welcome through Jesus our friend.**

Leader: The confused and the confusing,  
the confessing and the cursing.

**All: All are welcome in this place.  
All are welcome through Jesus our friend.**

Leader: Thank you, Lord, that we are welcome here too.  
Thank you, Lord, that I am welcomed by you.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Rabbi Jesus,  
teacher of life's lessons to we who are but life's students,  
gather us to sit at your feet and learn from you today.

You are the one who holds the words of eternal life,  
the one who feeds and heals,  
forgives and loves,  
even when we do and say unlovable things.

We come to worship you  
with our songs and words and prayers.  
May what we offer you be uplifting to you  
who observes our acts of worship  
and uplifting to us  
as we seek your grace and mercy and peace.

When we are tempted to think we know more than we do,  
have mercy upon us.

When we are tempted to live in anxiety and fear,  
remind us to not be afraid.

When our daily needs and wants cause us to worry,  
teach us about 'ornitheology',  
that we might learn from the sparrows.

The world of nature, of which we are part of course,  
has so much to teach us.

Open our eyes to the wonder of your world.

With eyes closed in prayer,  
open our imaginations also  
to the mystery of the spiritual realm  
that there, guided by your Spirit,  
we may learn to see as you see.

So we offer ourselves anew today  
with open hearts and open minds,  
receptive to all you can reveal to us.

We pray that our time together  
will be a time of growth and inspiration;  
a time of blessing and finding.  
Amen.



# worship ideas

## Prayer of Dedication

"The Worker is worth his keep", Lord,  
and you have certainly provided us  
with much more than our keep.  
Blessing after blessing is ours  
whether we think of house or health,  
welcome or wealth.

Take then the tokens of our love  
that we offer back to you  
from the riches you have gifted us.  
Take these offerings and use them.  
Take we who are your people and use us.  
Build your Kingdom of welcome here in this place  
and build your Kingdom of welcome here through us we ask.  
In the name of Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Lord,  
as we want for very little materially in our western world,  
others are in great need worldwide.  
Though the sparrow may not fall without your knowledge,  
many of our brothers and sisters fall unnoticed  
through all too many ordinary, everyday needs.  
We take our daily needs for granted,  
yet lack of food or lack of water  
brings too many to their untimely end.  
We take our homes for granted,  
yet lack of home or lack of security  
brings death by the thousand.

Oh Lord, how long must it be so that good people,  
children, parents, grandparents,  
must tolerate and endure such an unfair world.  
How long will it go on that billions go without the basics,  
whilst billionaires increase their wealth year on year.

Hear our cries, oh Lord, for justice.  
Hear our cries, oh Lord, for fairness.  
Hear our cries, oh Lord, for the forgotten people  
of our modern world,  
your children, members of our human family.

And amongst us too, God, there is pain and plight.  
We think of our community where food banks are in use,  
or where homes are threatened by financial constraint.  
We think of the strain upon our health services,  
or those who feel isolated and alone.  
We think of those who have lost loved ones to death,  
and feel lost in their grief now themselves.

For your Church, world and people we pray.  
In your mercy, Lord, hear our prayer.

### *Silence*

Yes, Lord, we are taught that all are worthy in your sight.  
May it be that all will be worthy  
in the sight of the powerful  
and in our sight too.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

Eternal God,  
Creator of all that is  
and teacher to we who seek to learn,  
thank you for the Scriptures  
that we have had passed onto us,  
written over so many generations  
in so many places and by so many authors.  
From Genesis to Revelation  
these pages are packed full with lessons for life.

Today in our worship  
there are so many images  
by which you would have us learn.  
So in reflection, Lord,  
we think of the concepts you shared then  
and still share now:

Students and teachers.

### *Pause*

"Do not be afraid".

### *Pause*

Sparrows and their worth.

### *Pause*

Sparrows and our worth.

### *Pause*

Acknowledging and disowning.

### *Pause*

When we read these words and phrases  
we ask that you would help us to truly listen;  
to listen to the words,  
to listen to the nuance,  
to listen for surprises,  
to listen anew to the familiar:

Peace and sword.

### *Pause*

Division.

### *Pause*

Taking up the cross.

### *Pause*

Finding and losing.

### *Pause*

Eternal God,  
Creator of all that is  
and teacher to we who seek to learn,  
thank you for the Scriptures  
that we have had passed onto us,  
written over so many generations  
in so many places and by so many authors.  
From Genesis to Revelation  
these pages are packed full with lessons for life.  
Amen.

## Reflection

*The author saw a leucitic sparrow while walking a dog (leucism is the partial absence of pigmentation in an animal which results in white or paler colouration).*



Many sparrows,  
one white sparrow  
stood out in a flock.  
You cannot miss it.  
This leucitic bird,  
so vulnerable  
on the face of predation.

Many people,  
one odd person  
stood out in a crowd.  
You cannot miss it.  
This marginalised individual  
so vulnerable  
in the face of persecution.

The sparrow and the person  
at the bottom of the pecking order.  
What do we care about them?  
Yet they are unexpected messengers from God  
showing the other side of Jesus,  
the one we don't want to know.  
"I have not come to bring peace, but a sword."  
So brutally straightforward  
bringing division between 'Them' and 'Us',  
in how we see another in low degree and of little worth.  
Yet such insignificant creatures have their place  
in the loving and attentive care of God.

## Take Home Ideas

Each January the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) in the UK organises a Birdwatch. The advertising blurb for 2020 said, "an hour with the birds is a wonderful opportunity to sit back, relax and spend time with nature. So, pop the kettle on, put your feet up and start counting!"

The idea is that people are invited to count the number of birds landing in their garden or patch of public garden in 1 hour. The serious point is of course a study of bird numbers/variety of species and trends with the associated questions of factors such as climate change affecting bird numbers and type.

Spend some time out in your garden or out in the open this week and take notice of the birds and wildlife you see around you. If you wish, you could count it all out—what you see and hear over a period of time. Listen for the noise of nature as it mingles with the voices of people, the sound of transport and commerce.

Recognise our world for what it is: a mix of geography, wildlife, humanity, hustle and bustle, and stillness. Consider that God is present in the mix of it all. Consider our place in the mix of it. Consider what God seeks from us.

## Sending

The sparrow has value to God and creation.  
The worm has value to God and creation.  
You, we, are cherished by God.  
Every moment of constructive conversation  
teems with value and possibility.  
Every reflective silence is rich in potential.  
This time, this creation, this life needs us.  
No holding back, no holding in, no waiting.  
Go, to live, be counted, and serve God,  
today, tomorrow and always.

## Praise/Hymns

A little more	see <a href="#">page 112</a>
Everyone in the whole wide world	JP 333
For I'm building a people of power	MP 151
Go, tell it on the mountain	MP 179
How firm a foundation	MP 243
Praise the One who breaks the darkness	CH4 348
'Take up your cross,' the Saviour said	CH4 402
There are hundreds of sparrows	JP 246
When your Father made the world	CH4 239
Why should I feel discouraged	online at <a href="https://hymnary.org/text/why_should_i_feel_discouraged">https://hymnary.org/text/why_should_i_feel_discouraged</a>
Will you come and follow me	CH4 533
You formed us in your image, Lord	online at <a href="https://www.carolynshymns.com/you_formed_us_in_your_image_lord.html">https://www.carolynshymns.com/you_formed_us_in_your_image_lord.html</a>
You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd	CH4 355



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Bird Watching

all age

*You will need: pictures of garden birds.*

Show the children pictures of birds that they would be able to see in their own gardens or local park.

- Can you identify any of the birds?
- Which of the birds is a sparrow?

## crafts

### Paper Plate Sparrows

age 3-5

*You will need: paper plates, crayons, scraps of paper (cut into semi circles), PVA glue, glue spreaders.*

Give the children a paper plate each and ask them to draw eyes and a beak in the top third of the plate. Ask the children to stick semi circles of paper onto the plate making feathers for their sparrows.

Talk about birds the children are familiar with, such as pigeons, robins, sparrows and seagulls! Talk about how each tiny bird is precious to God. Talk about how each one of us is precious to God.

### Bird Feeders

all age

*You will need: pipe cleaners, wool, ring-shaped cereals (like Cheerios or equivalents), scissors.*

Give each child a pipe cleaner. Ask the children to fold one end of the pipe cleaner up to form a tick shape. Ask the children to thread the Cheerios onto the pipe cleaner, leaving a 2 cm space at the end without any cereal hoops.

Ask the children to twist the two ends of the pipe cleaner together securely, making a ring. Give each child a length of wool to attach to the birdfeeder so that it can be hung from the branch of a tree or bush.



Have a conversation with the children about birds they are familiar with. Talk about how each tiny bird is precious to God. How can we help to look after birds and other creatures who share our gardens and parks and countryside? Talk about how each one of us is precious to God.

### Pompom Sparrows

age 6-12

*You will need: cardboard rings cut in doughnut shape (about 8 cm in diameter), scraps of wool, scissors, scraps of felt, PVA glue, glue spreaders.*

Give each child two cardboard rings. Ask the children to hold the two cardboard rings together and to wind wool around the two rings, going through the hole in centre. The pieces of wool should not be too long and the ends can be wrapped into the wool being put round the ring. There are online tutorials for making pompoms. It sounds a lot harder than it is. Once you get going it's quite easy.

The children can change the colour of wool as often as they wish. Once the centre of the doughnut is almost full, the children should cut the wool around the outside edge, then place a piece of wool between the two cardboard rings, pull the wool tightly and tie securely. The children might need a bit of help with this part. The two cardboard rings can then be removed by sliding them off or by tearing the cardboard and removing it. The pompom can now be trimmed and fluffed up to make a ball shape. Ask the children to cut eyes and a beak from the felt and to glue those onto the pompom at the appropriate points.



Have a conversation with the children about birds – types, what they eat, what they sound like, what size they are, where they see birds, does anyone have budgies or other birds as pets? Talk about the number and variety of birds we see. Talk about the tiny sparrow and how each one is precious to God. Talk about how each person is precious to God. Discuss how we then should love one another.



# games

## Three-Legged Race

age 3-5

*You will need: ties or scarves.*

The traditional game of tying two children's feet side by side and asking them to walk the length of the room. Be careful with this to ensure no injuries!

At the beginning of the race people find it awkward and difficult to get moving in harmony but very quickly they learn how to work together. Jesus wants us to live in peace and be happy and learn to pull in one direction.

## Roll The Dice!

age 3-5

*You will need: dice, messages on separate pieces of paper, a selection of music that is fast, slow, noisy, quiet.*

The children need to throw a six to be the leader each time (needless to say all children need to be a leader at some point). At the other end of the room are a variety of messages that the children can pick up when it is their turn. If a child throws a six you play a piece of music and the child leads off the whole group to the messages while doing an impersonation of a sparrow, with the tempo of the music guiding different movements. The lead person brings the message back to the front where you read it out. It can be a message or single words to make up a message. Examples might be: God loves us! God loves the sparrows! God loves peace! God loves us working together! God loves us talking about him!

Discuss with the children what happens if mummy or daddy are upset with them. What is it like for them to be upset, do they like that feeling? God wants us to be good people, happy people and get along with one another.

## Division Or Unity

age 6-12

*You will need: 1. rolled up newspaper for each person and a few inflated balloons; 2. nothing.*

1. Firstly the children need to be split into team A and team B. After that they then need to be paired up with an opposing player. Once paired up they need to stand back to back and link arms at the elbows. Give each child a rolled-up newspaper. Set up a goal at each end of your room and then toss in the inflated balloon. The children can use the rolled-up newspaper or their feet to bat the balloon. The children must try and score a goal but they are both working in opposite directions.

This game should be quite difficult for the children because they are working against each other with one needing to go in one direction and one in the other. How did the children feel when things were not going in their direction: frustrated, annoyed or angry? It can be very difficult to be at peace with everyone around you when we all have different views and emotions. Discuss the various beliefs, cultures and customs that many different lands have.

2. Keep the children in their pairs and have them back to back with their arms linked at the elbows. This time they need to work together in unity. Ask the children to lean into each other and sit down on the floor and then get them to stand back up without releasing each other's arms. Then add another two members together making it four people with their backs to each other and linked at their elbows. Do the same again and if you have enough children make it six then eight.

We need to try our best to work in peace and unity with others. In this game it only works when people work together and that is what Jesus is wanting us to do: to work together for peace and unity in our world.

## Choices And Cost

age 9-12

*You will need: a varied selection of items of any cost but you need to know how much they are to buy and place the cost on the underside of the item hidden from the children, pens and paper.*

This is based loosely on the television show *First and Last*. Show the children one item from your selection and ask them to guess the price. The child who has the highest and lowest guess away from the true cost are cast out. Repeat this a few times until only one remains. If you have enough items do it all over again.

Today's passage appears to be full of cost and/or choices. This is something we confront every day of lives—making choices—and the cost of our decisions can be heavy if we get them wrong. What are the penalties we face when we go against what other people ask of us? When we do something wrong it upsets other people from parents to teachers to friends. After discussing this talk about being cast out of the game because they were the highest or lowest in the game. Many people are cast out in life because of their skin colour, the country they are from, because they struggle to read or write or because they are disabled. Many people find themselves living on the margins of society. How can we help and what should we be doing? What is the cost to us when we marginalise people? What is the cost to the person being marginalised?

# age group ideas

## activities

### Ripples Of Division

age 3-5

*You will need: a basin of water for every group of three children and objects to drop in the water.*

Let the water settle in the basin so that it is flat and calm. Allow the children to drop the items into the water and see the ripple effect. By using different weighted objects, the ripples will vary.

Little things can cause division to start and the ripple effect can become much larger. Talk about small things happening where the ripple effect gets larger, such as dropping a crisp packet on the ground which may encourage others to do the same and if more and more people do that it really harms the environment. If you eat one sweet after another the ripple effect is that you could have a sore stomach, be sick, mum or dad need to clean it up, you might miss out on an outing. If something is causing a problem you need to speak about it and deal with it.

### Safe And Secure

age 6-12

*You will need: a portable safe or a box with a lock/padlock, a picture of Jesus inside the box.*

Leave the safe in full view of the children until the end of your talk. Do they know what the object is? What is it used for? Do they or their parents have one? What would they put in it? At the end of the discussion open the safe and pull out the picture of Jesus. Jesus knows everything and we should not keep Jesus a secret but tell everyone about him.



Sometimes people put secrets in safes and locked boxes; something that they do not want anyone to know about. But Jesus tells us he knows everything and that in a life of faith we should not hide our secrets because they will be found out.

### Hairs On Your Head

age 6-12

*You will need: each child needs to bring in their hairbrush (uncleaned as you need the hairs that are on it), A4 sheet of white paper for each child.*

Give each child a sheet of paper and ask them to start taking the strands of hair out of their hairbrush. Once they have got as many as they can they are to count them. It will not be that many. The leaders can do the same and their brush will have a lot more than those of the children!

Why do we use hairbrushes, what happens to our hairbrushes after a few times of brushing our hair? The average person has between 140,000 and 200,000 hairs on their head at any given time. Jesus tells us he cares for us even more than that.

### Divisions Today

age 9-12

*You will need: newspaper clippings or headlines printed from the internet about the variety of divisions in the world today (examples might be Brexit, independence, religion, food, drink, drugs, NHS, of less importance the division between children and adults about what is right and wrong, computer time, tidying up, money and so on, the children will know quite a bit already).*

Allow the children to look at the various topics and ask them if they have any views on the topics, or to tell everyone where they stand in the argument? You want to have a little debate or a vote for or against with the whole group.

God gave us free will to think for ourselves so people have different views on just about everything. The same applies to church life, school life, home life, everything. Lots of people struggled hearing what Jesus said because some did not like change, others did not like what they heard. However, in today's world we need to respect and try to understand what people believe and think carefully about whether we agree with them or not.





# discussion starters for teens being included, mostly

## Preparation

If you do not know the game Bring It To Me, then you may want to check the following link <http://www.campustalkblog.com/bring-it-to-me/>. Please adapt this to your situation, as this game can be used in virtual meetings and physical gatherings. Ability to play some high octane music.

## Opening Activity

### Bring It To Me

Try playing the game described from the web link above. Be careful with it if you have a large group just to keep everyone safe while still energised and having fun.

Be imaginative in what you task the group to get for you.

If you do not have the numbers to play this game you could create a simple treasure hunt style game with challenges for the team to work out in order to find an item you have hidden in your meeting space.

## The Word

Read Matthew 10:24-39 together.

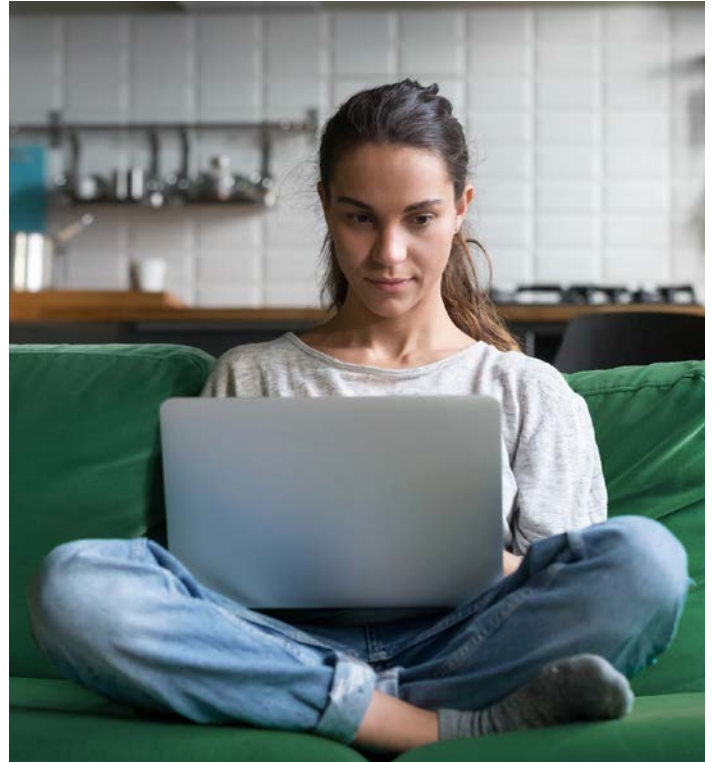
## Activity/Discussion

Recently, what with one thing and another, Zoom and Houseparty have become top-rated tools to enable groups to chat with each other. To use these tools, someone hosts and invites others to join them in an online chat facility. The host has the power to mute everyone's microphone, to let people in from the waiting room and also to kick people out.

- Have you been part of a Zoom or Houseparty video conference?
- What does it feel like to be included and invited?
- Did you know someone else has the power to change or stop your interaction?
- How does it feel to give someone else the power to be able to mute you and thus to stop you participating?

We are invited by Jesus to share our invitation widely. But the church has not been the best at working out what it means to include everyone. Using Zoom or a similar thing gives the power to a small number of people who can then designate who is in and who is out.

- Where have you seen people who are struggling?
- Where have you seen people try to include everyone (including those who struggle)?
- Is it ever right to say to people they are invited, but only partly?
- Can you think of a time where young people are invited but not included fully?

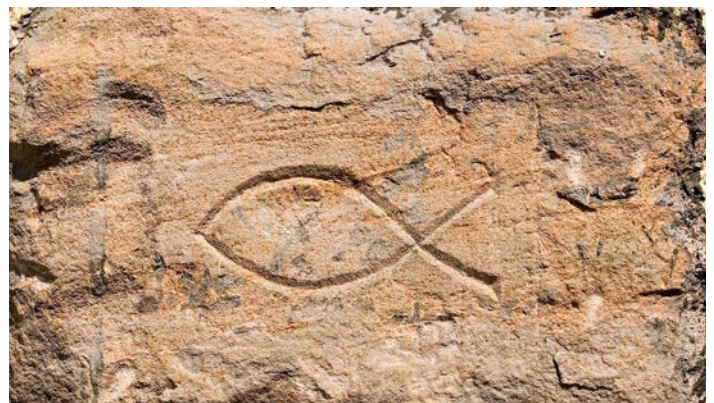


## Living It Out

Jesus asks listeners to do things. Where Jesus whispers, we should shout; where Jesus talks in the dark, we should speak in the light. Jesus also says that it will be hard to do and potentially divisive. He is ending with a bit about family relations. Family relations are very close to us all as our living conditions are changed, happily for some people, not so for others. The early church used an Ichthys fish sign to pass the word on to each other.

If you were to draw a symbol, what would it be for us today?

Take paper and pens and work out what it would be. It can be as clear or as secretive as you like. After five minutes share with the group what you have initially sketched out.





pentecost 4  
sunday 28 june 2020

# everyone is welcome

## bible notes

Genesis 22:1-14

Psalms 13

Romans 6:12-23

**Matthew 10:40-42**

### Living Water

One of the great principles of many of the mainline faiths is hospitality and welcome. It is often one of the first things a congregation puts at the top of their list in describing themselves, indeed it comes before describing what they believe in many instances. Many faith communities describe themselves as friendly and welcoming yet there is much research that suggests we tend to be welcoming towards those who know us and that welcome revolves around our own cliques.

In Jesus' day, the ethic of welcome was simply part of the culture of thousands of years. But because of that, it had evolved into a much greater ethic than a simple handshake, or invitation to come to coffee following the service.

Because it was so deeply ingrained it was far less about simply welcoming a person as a lone individual. The hospitality of welcome had grown into accepting and welcoming and honouring everything that individual stood for along with those who were allied to them, family, community. It was a network you welcomed: all the faces behind the face of the one standing before you.

So when Jesus says the words, "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me" it is the general taken-for-granted idea that if someone welcomes a disciple then that person welcomes all those allied to that disciple, namely Jesus.

It is a way of seeing the world where everyone is connected, aware of our neighbour and our neighbour's networks. We are very keen on networks in our society today—it is how Facebook works—yet we remain a very individualistic society.

What is interesting here is Jesus being quite specific about the company he keeps and thus the people that are welcomed whenever you welcome a disciple.

Part of the idea of welcome is to honour those we are

associated with you. You respect them, give them space, honour their character and goals. Thus in welcoming "these little ones" be they children, or the least in society, you are placing yourself beside them, respecting and honouring them.

So in some way this is quite a political thing: if you wish to welcome Jesus, you welcome also the least, the lost, the forgotten, all those he kept company with. And Jesus did not keep good company! We know that to be true given the reaction from all the authority figures and the scandal he built up around himself. He is using the deep cultural sense of what welcome means to shift everyone closer to each other, and include those who are normally excluded.

Therefore, if we welcome Jesus, we welcome the least.

Thus let us reflect in our own faith communities how that works for each of us who believe we are a welcoming church. When we speak of "welcoming Jesus into our lives" is there room for those we are prejudiced towards, those we are awkward with, those we fear?

This is not a simple 'faith' statement about some personal belief. It is a kingdom statement that affirms we are living in a particular way in the world that goes beyond the comfortable circles we easily welcome, and finds us in the places the world fears to go, where our own culture puts up barriers and where we will find ourselves receiving the response Jesus received from those that controlled that culture.

So from this passage of just a couple of verses, comes a whole ethic and invitation of the kingdom, our call, intent, faith and our response to it. Those who welcome me, welcome the least, and those who welcome the least, have already welcomed me.

# the story

## Welcome

Andy: (Goes around and shakes people's hand saying) Welcome! Welcome!

Ada: (Ada enters church seeing Andy shaking hands)

Andy: Welcome! Welcome...

Ada: What are you doing, Andy?

Andy: I am showing everyone how welcoming we are as a church! (Carries on and shakes hands and says welcome)

Ada: Er, Andy, I think the welcome team have already done that!

Andy: The what?

Ada: The welcome team! You know the people at the church door that welcome folk every Sunday!

Andy: Oh, have we got folk like that?

Ada: Of course, we have.

Andy: Well, sometimes they don't seem very welcoming.

Ada: Oh Andy, I am sure that's not true.

Andy: I am telling you Ada, some of them don't even smile or talk to you.

Ada: No!

Andy: And the way they look at strangers sometimes, you'd think they were bouncers rather than welcomers!

Ada: Andy, Mrs Smith is five foot nothing and weighs about six stone. She cannae be much of a bouncer!

Andy: Aye but the way she looks at you would freeze a bonfire!

Ada: Andy! You cannot say that. We are a very welcoming church. Everybody in the congregation says so.

Andy: Aye, Ada, that is because we know each other and who to avoid! Welcoming is really so much more than an odd smile, handing someone a hymnbook and an order of service, or the occasional funny handshake!

Ada: Well what do you mean Andy?

Andy: Well Ada, to welcome literally means "to take into one's hand". That is not a polite smile or nod of the head, but actually to embrace people into our own world.

Ada: Really, Andy?

Andy: Yes, Ada. As Christians we welcome people not just in our name but in Christ's name. We are welcoming them not just to church but to the whole kingdom of God. It's a welcome that should remind everyone that they are loved, and a child of God.

Ada: Wow, Andy, you feel real strongly about this.

Andy: I do, Ada! A wee cup of cold water to a stranger is a sign of Christ's love to the thirsty, so a welcome in church should mean that we really do care for people, and not just an acknowledgement at the church door.

Ada: Well, Andy, you certainly have given me something to think about today.

Andy: I hope I have given everyone something to think about!

## Retelling For Young People

### Welcome

Imagine if someone new came to your church.

How might you make them feel welcome?

"Say Hi" said Lewis.

"Say hello and tell them your name" shouted Heather.

"You could shake their hand?" said Norma.

"Or, give them a hug" said Jacqueline.

"Maybe you could do all of that, and then ask them around to your house to play? That might make them feel really welcome" said John.

"Maybe you could also tell them what other things happen in Church" said Thomas.

"Or invite them to the BB, or Brownies or Guides, that would be a way to show they are welcome at other things too" shouted Heather.

"Or, find out if they are going to your school and you could show them around and introduce them to some of your friends" remarked Owain.

"Why not ask them just to be your friend, like Jesus did?" said Iona.

"Yes" said Lorna. "They should definitely be told that Jesus loves them."

- Can you think of any other things you could do to make people feel welcome?





# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

- Who is sitting around you?
- Family?
- Friends?
- Strangers?
- Fellow church members we know well through church matters of business?

It is relatively easy and straightforward to welcome those we know and like. It is more difficult to extend a welcome to those we do not know.

Invite the more extrovert people to go and say "Hello, I'm NAME" to two people they do not know so well, saying, "I notice you come to church on a regular basis and I'm sorry, but I don't think I really know you. Please know that I am grateful you are part of my church family. Isn't it great that we are all welcome in this place?"

For those less extrovert, encourage the quiet utterance of a prayer for two people they are unfamiliar with.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Some of us are hurting,  
some of us are smarting.

**All: All are welcome in this place.**

Leader: Some of us are very young,  
some of us are getting old.

**All: All are welcome in this place.**

Leader: Some of us have hearts of gladness,  
some of us are filled with grief.

**All: All are welcome in this place.**

Leader: The strong and the weak, the faithful and doubter,  
the saint and sinner, the regular and visitor.

**All: All are welcome in this place.**

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Welcoming God,  
we come to you  
as we often do,  
knowing that you  
are waiting with open arms,  
ready to welcome us,  
your family,  
here in this place.

Welcoming Jesus,  
so often the recipient of hospitality  
and yet willing to sit with anyone,  
saint and sinner alike,  
we come to you  
knowing you are prepared to budge up  
and let us sit with you.

Welcoming Spirit,  
so often hidden from sight  
and yet so large a part  
of any gathering of God's people,  
we come to you  
knowing that the whispers of welcome  
are all around us.

Knowing we are welcomed  
and yet knowing that we  
have not always been deserving of that welcome,  
your wide arms of grace, O God,  
are too much to take in.  
When we come with our heads dipped in shame  
you gently lift our chins,  
gaze into our eyes,  
and say: welcome child,  
so good to see you.

Lord, may we never take this for granted,  
try harder to live up to your gracious welcome,  
accept your love and, in turn,  
offer that same love and welcome  
to all whom we meet.

Lord, gracious Lord,  
hear our prayer.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

Lord,  
we bring to you our offerings:  
our money, our time and ourselves,  
not as payment for something given  
but out of adoration and thanksgiving  
for all we have received.  
Take what we offer and who we are,  
bless them to the work of this church  
and your kingdom.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

God of welcome,  
we thank you that  
you are always ready, waiting to welcome us,  
always waiting to spend time with us  
and hear what we want to bring to you in prayer.

This prayer could be an endless list  
and there will be situations missed  
and people escaping our attention,  
but we know that you are able to  
see beyond our limited memories  
and hold all that pains creation  
with us and for us.

We are so consumed by the effects of a virus  
that many situations have gone unnoticed.

We pray now for those in our world  
who feel forgotten:

for refugees in camps  
not only worried about when their lives  
might take a better turn but now  
also fearful of this invisible danger;

for men, women and children  
behind closed doors  
living with danger and torment  
at the hands of people who profess to love them;

for people living with life-limiting conditions,  
relying on reduced levels of care,  
fearful of catching this virus  
as they fear their treatment will be limited;

for those in the background  
within care-giving services,  
the cleaners and janitorial staff,  
the administrators and managers,  
doing what is needed to ensure  
hospitals and care homes  
run smoothly and safely;

for places of conflict where,  
with attention elsewhere,  
dangers are increased and tensions raised,  
and where deaths continue  
unheeded.

So many places,  
so many concerns, Lord;  
thank you that we can bring them to you.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

Jesus says: "Welcome,  
all are welcome."  
That includes me  
and you  
and everyone.

Really God?  
Me?  
And everyone?  
Even them?

Thank you, God,  
that you welcome us all.  
Thank you  
that you love each of us,  
every one of us.

You are truly awesome.  
Your love is awesome,  
making me awesome.  
Thank you, God.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

Lord,  
can I pull up a chair?  
Can I sit with here a while with you?  
Not too long though,  
I don't want to outstay my welcome.

You see, Lord,  
It is so good to feel  
wanted and welcome,  
not to be turned away  
or greeted with a "what now?"

I try, Lord, to be like you:  
not to bristle when someone  
expects something from me;  
not to let my impatience show;  
to give people space and time.

I know, Lord,  
that in saying "welcome"  
it opens up possibilities,  
some good and some that well,  
you know...  
will take all my patience.

And in sitting with you awhile  
I am reminded again  
what "welcome" looks like  
and feels like.  
Thank you, God,  
for letting me sit awhile.  
I will leave you in peace now.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Reflection

"Whoever welcomes a prophet..."

A prophet.

A messenger from God  
telling people what God says you need to know.

How often do we like to hear  
the truth that exposes our falsehood?

How often do we want to step out  
from our comfort zone  
with our like-minded community?

How often do we form unfavourable opinions  
towards the messenger of unpopular news?

We tend to forget that a messenger of God  
may be an innocent bearer,  
and we vent our anger on them  
instead of on the Creator himself,  
revealing our true selves.

So...

Don't shoot the messenger.

## Take Home Ideas

Pour water into a jug and perhaps add some ice. Add some  
fruit for flavour.

Look out a single glass to stand to the side of the jug or a  
number of glasses if you are part of a group/family.

Pause for a moment and just consider the water.

Reflect on:

- its simple composition (just Hydrogen and Oxygen)—a miracle in itself;
- its uses—a drink, for plant growth, for bathing, for cooking, for putting out fires and so on;
- its value as a commodity—especially in times/ places of drought;
- its importance in the Bible—Red Sea, water from the stone, River Jordan, Sea of Galilee, wedding at Cana, and many other examples,
- consider, water is God's gift to us—to use, to share, and to make available.

Pour the water into the glass (glasses) and listen as you do so to the noise of water hitting the bottom and sides of the glass.

Share with others, and drink from the glass (glasses) and savour the water that comes from God and all the water represents that comes from God, the Life-Giving Creator.

## Sending

God of design and creation's manufacture,  
Jesus, purifier and water of life,  
Spirit, sustainer and the world's preservation agent,  
before you we gathered,  
from you we take,  
away with you we go,  
taking up the cause as you demand:  
we go to serve your world.

## Praise/Hymns

As we are gathered Jesus is here	CH4 197 / MP 38
Come all ye people	CH4 757
Come and find the quiet centre	CH4 716
Gather us in, Love that fillest all	CH4 714
Great God your love has called us here	CH4 484
Here in this place new light is streaming	CH4 623
Here is the place, now is the time	CH4 678
I am the Church! You are the church!	CH4 204
Let us build a house	CH4 198
Lord, you have always been our home	CH4 54
O God, to whom shall we go?	CH4 345
The one who longs to make us whole	CH4 719
Welcome everybody	<i>I Wonder... Why?</i> , Fischy Music
What a friend we have in Jesus	CH4 547 / MP 746
Within the circle of your friends	<i>Known Unknowns</i> , WGP





# age group ideas

## gathering

### Welcome

all age

*You will need: a copy of the words and music for the well known Fischy Music song "Welcome everybody", found on the CD "I Wonder... Why?", glasses of water.*

As everyone gathers today welcome everyone by name and offer everyone a cup of water.

Teach the children the actions for the song "Welcome everybody" and sing it through together.

## games

### Simon Says "Welcome!"

age 3-5

*You will need: plenty of room.*

Practice affirmations and hospitality while also playing the traditional follow my leader game: Simon Says. In this variation allow children who sit down early to lead the next round rather than the winner.

We can twist and turn traditional games into the shape of more gracious behaviour without taking the lesson or ourselves too seriously. Silliness and laughter can teach more profound points.

### Do You Love Your Neighbour

age 6-12

*You will need: room to move.*

A slight spin on an icebreaker game. Sit in a circle on the floor or in chairs. The leader stands in the middle of the circle and begins the game by selecting one person and asking them "Do you love your neighbour?" The person can answer "Yes" in which case the folk to their left and right must swap spots while the leader also tries to sit down. The person can also answer "Yes, but I also love..." and then they can add any kind descriptor that does not single anyone else out specifically.

For example, they could say "Yes, but I also love everyone with brown eyes" or "Yes, but I also love everyone wearing trainers". Everyone who fits that description stands up and find a new seat. The person left standing begins the next round.

Our differences are a gift to be celebrated. Valuing and honouring difference is a powerful form of hospitality.

## activities

### Laundry Pin Praise

age 6-12

*You will need: wooden laundry pins and markers.*

Invite children to write words of welcome and blessing upon the sides of wooden laundry pins. Play some music and have them mingle around the room while gently pinning them on each other. Invite them to take extra pins home and share them with friends and family.

Simple but authentic words of welcome, thanks, and affirmation add up and make a difference in a person's life and community ethos. This flows directly from Christ's instruction in the Gospel.

### Welcome Cards

all age

*You will need: A4 paper, pencils, access to a photocopier.*

This is a simple activity to make and share welcome cards with others in the church. Give each child a piece of A4 paper and ask them to fold it in half to form a greeting card. Invite each child to draw a picture of welcome upon the cover side of their greeting card. Inside they can write words of welcome. It can be scripture, poetry or any words of welcome. Paul's opening salutation is always a good starting point: "Grace and Peace to you from God, and from our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ensuring there are enough copies, share these cards with the congregation the following week. One possibility is to invite the children to be greeters and hand out the cards before the start of worship if they have been prepared earlier.

Welcome and hospitality does not need to be complicated. To bear genuine welcome to one another is to carry the grace and peace of Christ. Never underestimate the power of simple hospitality as a profound starting place for new relationship and new life to form.

# age group ideas

## crafts

### Welcome Poster

age 3-5

*You will need: The letters W-E-L-C-O-M-E approximately 12 cm tall and 10 cm wide cut out of coloured card (note two sets of letters would be required if you have more than seven children in your group), decorating materials such as scraps of material, felt, wool, shiny coloured paper, sequins, glitter, felt-tip pens, PVA glue, glue spreaders, frieze paper, slips of coloured paper approximately 9 cm x 13 cm, pattern edged scissors.*

Give each child one of the letters of the word WELCOME and let them decorate their letter. When complete place the letters along the top of the frieze paper and secure in place. Now give each child a piece of coloured paper and ask them to write their own name decoratively on the paper and then trim around the edge using the patterned scissors. Get the children to place their names on the frieze paper at unusual angles under the word WELCOME as a sign of them all being welcome.

Talk with the children about the importance of being welcoming. Discuss the different ways we can welcome people. Talk about all of them being welcome in your group and how they might make new people feel welcome to join them.

### Cups Of Cold Water

age 6-8

*You will need: a clear hard plastic disposable tumbler for each child, ribbon, washi tape, self-stick sequins, jewels and stickers, PVA glue, glue spreaders.*

Give each child a tumbler and ask them to decorate it with the materials provided.

Talk with the children about the importance of being welcoming. Discuss the different ways we can welcome people, sometimes with a cool drink. Talk about how they feel when they are made to feel welcome and how they feel when they feel they are not welcomed. Share a welcoming glass of cold water together.

### All Are Welcome

age 9-12

*You will need: a length of green frieze paper, brightly coloured wool and chenille pipe-cleaners, green paper for stems and leaves, PVA glue, glue spreaders, scissors, a list of the word 'welcome' in a variety of other languages, coloured paper.*

Explain to the children that they are going to make a welcoming wall frieze decorated with flowers. On a separate piece of paper show the children how to make a flower head by cutting a long length of wool and then spreading glue in a large circle shape on the paper. Starting in the middle of the circle press the end of the wool down firmly and then circle the wool in ever increasing circles around the centre pressing down into the glue as you go to create a flat spiral shaped flower head. Cut out a stem and leaves for the flower and glue to the paper. Now lay out the frieze paper

and assign an area to each child and let them create their own flower heads along the length of the paper adding a stem and leaves.

Talk with the children about the importance of being welcoming and talk about how they can be welcoming to others. Discuss how they feel when they are made welcome and how they feel if they are not made welcome. Look at the different ways of saying welcome in different languages and discuss how they could make people who may not speak their own language understand that they are welcome.

Now let the children write some of the welcoming words from other languages in decorative writing on coloured paper, cut them out and add to their welcoming wall frieze.

### Ice Cube Painting

all age

*You will need: an ice cube tray, craft lollipop sticks, paint, a little water, a freezer, A3 sized paper, protection for clothes and surfaces (or take this activity outdoors, it will be more fun).*

*Note that the ice cubes need to be prepared ahead.*

Prepare paint cubes by filling each part of an ice cube tray with a different colour of paint—or if you wish two colours in the one cube, like a layer of yellow, then a layer of blue which may merge to make green when the water is added—then top each paint cube off with a little water. Place in the freezer for about 30 minutes then take out and add a lollipop stick to each cube and place back in the freezer to fully freeze. Take out of the freezer just a short time before you are going to use them with the children.

Talk with the children about the different ways you could welcome someone (by giving them a hug, by shaking their hand, by saying hello). Talk about how you might welcome someone if you lived in a very hot country or if it was a very hot day and encourage them to think of giving the person a cooling drink and how that might make the person feel. Ask them to think about why we add ice to drinks.

Now give them a piece of the paper and explain that to help others feel welcome they are going to paint a 'Welcome' poster but not with paint and a paintbrush but rather with an ice cube paintbrush. Then show them the ice cube paintbrushes and let them choose an ice cube with which to paint their 'Welcome' poster. Hopefully the sun will be shining and as the ice cubes melt the paint will flow.



# discussion starters for teens

## rhythms of hospitality

### Preparation

Ask everyone to prepare a disguise for the Opening Activity this week, if meeting physically in a group the young people can bring the costume. If meeting virtually have the outfit out of webcam shot.

For Living It Out, the group is thinking about how it could show hospitality to others. Prepare several example ideas which are achievable given your present constraints.



### Opening Activity

#### Guess Who

Let everyone take turns putting on their disguises. Then let everyone try to guess who they are supposed to be disguising themselves as. The outfits can be as silly or obtuse as they like.

- What are the small things you have observed or by which you have shown hospitality for others?
- How did it feel to be the person giving/receiving hospitality?
- Are young people often allowed to give hospitality?

### The Word

Read Matthew 10:40-42 together.

- Can you describe the picture in your mind's eye of the situation in which Jesus was talking in this short reading?

### Activity/Discussion

This passage is part of Jesus' talk before he is going to send out the 12 disciples on their own. He has gathered them to give them final guidance and encouragement before they go out. The critical thing he says is to look for people who offer hospitality to you, specifically look out for the small stuff.

- Where have you been surprised by someone looking after someone else?
- How did the people in the situation react to the offer and the response?
- How were the people in this situation changed by this hospitality?

In the UK under a Covid-19 lockdown every Thursday evening at eight, people go out and applaud for the National Health Service. It is an outward sign of encouragement and gratitude. We do not know all the people for whom we applaud and give thanks, but we like the concept of national care for which they stand. Not everyone who respects or is thankful for the NHS applauds as it is possible to show support in other ways.

### Living It Out

It is not comfortable to be hospitable when life is trying to settle to a new normal. The rhythm of what people can and cannot do is changed. Life is altered significantly; without schooling and with home working. Still, the critical question is how can I show hospitality for others in what I do? How can I write a love theme for the wilderness?

As a group make a list of the different things in your community, that you could do.

Perhaps you could post a card to every member of the church.

Perhaps you could make a small video of the bible reading for next Sunday's service.

Perhaps you could all put drawings of a dog in your windows (who doesn't love a cute dog drawing?).

Perhaps you could all tape a ribbon on the door at of your houses or at the church gates.

Perhaps you could pray for everyone at the church and your neighbours.

To live it out this week, ask every member of the group to take something from the list and try to do that thing.





pentecost 5  
sunday 5 july 2020

# everyone needs rest

## bible notes

Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67

Psalms 45:10-17

Romans 7:15-25a

**Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30**

### Transrational Grace

In the previous weeks it has been an inescapable observation that there is a tension at work in the texts. Underlying much of the imagery has been a latent existential threat to the community into which the imagery has offered assurance. There have been ripples of disagreement and division.

Through all of that Jesus has been offering his alternative way. There is on the one hand tension, and on the other hand the integrity of Jesus' ministry which he will take all the way to the cross, and beyond.

The engineer Richard Buckminster Fuller coined the term "tensegrity" back in the 1960s from "tensional integrity" to describe certain architectural forms that depend both on elements in compression and elements in tension. While that may not mean much to many of us, you will no doubt have seen toys that rely on this kind of structure. The word can be adopted to help us reflect on the nature both of the gospels and of life. We find this balance whereby keeping integrity depends on the tension in the framework of competing elements. There is no one simple answer to complex questions; there is an interplay of different elements, all vital to the integrity of the whole.



In theological terms we would describe that tense, bonding that holds all together as Grace, but it is an uneasy bond.

Grace is profoundly unsettling. Regardless of our biology,

biography, ideology, or theology; Christ's promises are for us all. Christ's challenges catch us all. The invitation of peace and assurance of presence does not come despite human contradiction and finitude, but amid our wounded and beautiful lives. Such Grace ends today's gospel reading, and that is always a good place to start. Unsettling Grace is the promise of Easter and the path of Pentecost. Richard Rohr says it this way in his 2020 Easter Homily:

*Grace is always free. Grace is always humiliating to the human ego. We just don't like getting love for free—and that, beloved is resurrection.*

Paradox, doubt, and contradiction are woven throughout the gospels. The journey of faith is no different. Be like John and you are a demon; be like Jesus and you are a glutton or drunkard. The kingdom is hidden from the wise and shown to the child. My yoke is easy and my burden light. Grace is transrational rather than transactional. It leads us away from any finality of expository exegesis. Instead, it urges us toward a peace that by its very nature passes understanding. Such peace is not the absence of tension but the presence of justice. The "easy" yoke and "light" burden are neither passive or parochial. Our task is never to earn God's love but to share that love. Grace comes as a pure gift and presents a persistent challenge which undoes the ego and can transform the world.

Proclamation rooted in unsettling Grace can navigate and inhabit the warrens of transrational interactions in the verses that precede those final familiar words of comfort and challenge. Such gracious navigations are a welcome respite from the politicized and polarized narratives that dominate our consumptive media culture of quick fixes and tribal loyalties.

# the story

## What Do You Want?

Whose baptism do you want?

John or Jesus?

Fire or water?

Refining or refreshing?

Ah, you want neither.

What message do you want?

That the world is terrible?

That the world is beautiful?

That you should weep or dance?

Feast or fast?

The sound of music or the sound of wailing?

Ah, you want none of these.

What kind of life do you want?

Friendship with sinners or frowning upon sinners?

Burdens and duties light or heavy?

Ah, you do not want either.

Are you not weary of all this?

Don't you want rest from all this?

All this arguing and picking fault;

all this complaining and finding everything unacceptable.

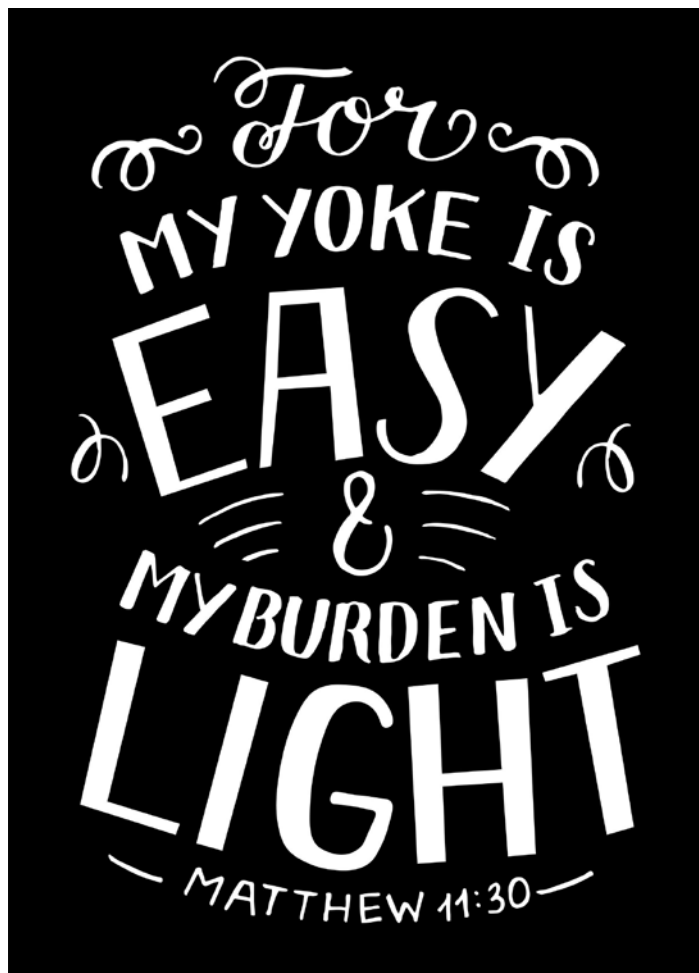
What do you want?

Take my yoke, will you, my easy yoke.

Learn from me, will you, from my gentle heart.

Here is rest from all this weariness and unwanting.

Come.



## Retelling For Young People

### What Do We Want To Do?

In a village in Scotland there lived a family of four children and their mum. They were doing their best to keep busy and get along well while they had to stay at home because of the Coronavirus. One day the children all got into a very grumpy mood and could not agree on what to do. Mum kept overhearing their arguments...

"Let's get the paddling pool out and have some fun!"

"No, I don't want to get soaking wet."

"You can go on the trampoline then."

"No, you might fall off and there are no ambulances, they are all too busy!"

"I don't want a noisy day and you'll all start screaming and shouting if you're in the paddling pool."

"Well, you can go inside and read your book then."

"I don't feel like reading."

"I think we should help mum by tidying our bedrooms."

"My bedroom is always tidy."

"And I like my bedroom the way it is, mum doesn't mind the mess."

"Why don't we go out on our bikes?"

"My bike still has a puncture and you can't buy repair kits just now."

Mum listened to all the unhappy, grumpy voices until at last she went outside and sat with her four children.

"You're having a tough day," she said, "you don't know what you want to do."

Four heads nodded slowly and sadly.

"I wonder if there's one thing you can agree on," said mum, with a twinkle in her eye. The children looked at her and waited. "Who wants to be arguing?"

One by one, the children smiled a little, because mum was right, nobody wanted to be arguing.

"Right. I'm going to the kitchen to start making some homemade biscuits. You can come and make some too—if you want to!"

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Reflect on the word “rest.”

- Do you feel rested after the night that has dawned on this new day?
- What does the word rest mean for you?

Think of each letter: R. E. S. T.

- Can you think of a word to associate with each letter that helps you to understand what Jesus means in giving rest for the weary?

Write those words down and, if you wish, share your thoughts with someone close to you.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Come to me,  
all you who are weary and burdened,  
and I will give you rest.

**All: We come, Lord Jesus,  
we are weary and heavily burdened  
and long for the rest you give.**

Leader: Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,  
for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

**All: We take your yoke upon us, Lord Jesus,  
make it easy and lighten our load.**

Leader: I am gentle and humble in heart,  
and you will find rest for your souls.

**All: We come to find that rest for our souls.  
Be gentle, Lord Jesus, and humble our hearts.**

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Come to me,  
come to me,  
come to me,  
is the chorus of your invitation, God.

Yet we arrive carrying so much baggage:  
things done and left undone.

We arrive with the very things we sought to leave behind:  
plans half-baked and hopes over-cooked.

And still, you are there:  
arms outstretched,  
welcome table prepared,  
grace already weaving its slow path  
through the warp and weft of our lives.

Easy is your yoke,  
light is your burden,  
steadfast is your kindness,  
set us free to rest in you.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

Reset our priorities,  
reorient our anxieties to reflect your image,  
alive in our innermost selves.  
In that way we might dedicate all that we have,  
and all that we are,  
to your steadfast loving kindness.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

It's hard to understand healing  
when so many are sick.

It's hard to understand blessing  
when so many are in need.

It's hard to trust  
when trust is so often broken.

Yet you come to us  
in the midst of sickness,  
in the midst of need,  
in the midst of brokenness.

And you see us—  
you see to our very hearts.

And you love us—  
you love us to our core.

Take these gifts and use them  
for the healing of the nations.

Take our lives and use them  
as blessings for brokenness.

Take our hearts  
and fill them with your love that never ends.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

We pray for the things that divide us,  
and keep us from seeing your image  
in the other,  
in the enemy,  
in ourselves.

We pray for the things we think unite us  
but actually push others away.  
Move us beyond  
our teams,  
our tribes,  
our parties,  
our definitions,  
and our denominations.

Prepare us for lives of  
yoke sharing,  
burden lifting,  
grace proclaiming,  
and peace breathing:  
for you are gentle and humble of heart.  
Amen.



## Reflective Prayer

Set for us a rhythm that sets our feet  
to the beat of your heart.  
Lead us on the path  
that winds towards your gentle way.

Give to us:  
rest on our journey,  
pleasure in our tasks,  
humility in our success,  
and forgiveness in our failures.

That the yokes and burdens,  
Of this journey,  
Might be of your making,  
And not our own.  
Amen.

## Reflection

Wherever she goes, the boxes go with her.  
Big boxes,  
medium,  
and small.  
Different shapes.  
All individually wrapped.  
Some in simple brown-paper packaging,  
others more elaborate,  
and tied with an exuberance of ribbons.

Wherever she goes, the boxes go with her.  
All of the boxes.  
All of the time.  
And in each box,  
no matter how haphazard,  
or carefully wrapped,  
the contents are, essentially, the same:  
cans of worms,  
that do not bear opening.

Wherever she goes, the boxes go with her.  
Over the course of time  
she has spent her life gathering boxes:  
adding to her collection  
until she can hardly walk  
under the soul-crushing weight of them.  
There is guilt,  
and shame,  
and a whole bundle of small boxed regrets,  
in purple wrap.

There is anger—  
wrapped red,  
and envy—  
a poisonous green;  
a big, black box,  
where all her hurts are housed,  
and nursed.

Wherever she goes, the boxes go with her.  
At the top of the pile  
is a small box, plain wrapped,  
in which only emptiness is found:  
her lack of forgiveness  
to herself:  
the harshness of the human heart,  
is a fearful and terrible judge.

Wherever she goes, the boxes go with her.  
And she is exhausted,  
with the carrying of them.  
So heavy and burdensome,  
that her back is bent,  
and she can no longer see the sky.  
In her bone-weary tiredness,  
she almost misses the invitation,  
and the hand held, outstretched:  
“Come to me,  
all you that are weary,  
and are carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.”  
She tastes the word ‘all’ tentatively,  
and savours freedom.  
The offer includes even her,  
with so many, many boxes.  
She sniffs the word ‘rest’ carefully;  
it smells sweet:  
and her back begins to straighten,  
and the boxes begin to tumble all about her.

Wherever she went, the boxes went with her.  
Until the day she chose the gifts  
of compassion and grace.  
Now wherever she goes  
there is a lightness about her,  
a spring in her step...  
and she never tires of seeing the sky.



# worship ideas

## Take Home Ideas



Consider a Tensegrity Arch. Tensegrity, as mentioned in the Bible Notes, is the principle that a web or net of different components can be attached together in the correct pattern through supporting tension bearing junctions, and that though the components themselves do not touch each other, the tensioned junction strands hold the whole form together as a solid entity. It is found in the human body; with ligaments, tendons, and bones, in manufacturing, with bridges, and in feature artwork.

From a faith point of view, consider what holds life together. What holds your life together? What holds society together? What holds the world together as a single humanity?

Where is there instability? What are the supporting, tension-bearing junctions that need to be worked on in your life, and in the lives of those in need across society and humanity?

When Jesus says: "Come to me..." what is he offering, to help us bear our loads?

## Sending

In our weariness we come before you, God:  
carrying our burdens.  
We come before you, God:  
confused and uncertain,  
fragile and shaky.

In you we find what we need.  
Support us and make us strong, Lord.  
Unite us as people  
and make the bonds between us stable.  
Father, Son, and Spirit—three in one,  
you are the arch of Divine Love  
that holds together our whole existence.

## Praise/Hymns

Amazing Grace	CH4 555 / MP 31 & 1151
Be thou my vision	CH4 465 / MP 51
Beauty for brokenness	CH4 259 / MP 806
Blessed be the name	online at <a href="https://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/blessed-be-your-name/">https://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/blessed-be-your-name/</a>
Blessed be the name of the Lord	MP 810
Christ's is the world in which we move	CH4 724
Come bring your burdens to God	<i>We Will Walk His Way</i> , WGP
Come to me	<i>We Will Walk His Way</i> , WGP
God is good, we sing and shout it	MP 185
I come with joy	CH4 656
I heard the voice of Jesus say	CH4 540 / MP 275
In God alone my soul can find rest	Taizé Community
Just as I am, without one plea	CH4 553 / MP 396
Nada te turbe	Taizé Community / SGP 79
Sing of the Lord's goodness	CH4 157
We played the flute the children said	online at <a href="http://www.carolynshymns.com/we_played_the_flute_the_children_said.html">http://www.carolynshymns.com/we_played_the_flute_the_children_said.html</a>
What a friend we have in Jesus	CH4 547 / MP 746
When I'm feeling down and sad	CH4 568
Will you come and follow me	CH4 533



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Naming Our Worries

all age

*You will need: a copy of "The Huge Bag of Worries" by Virginia Ironside, or a copy of the Fischy Music song "Bring It All To Me".*

As the children gather, take time to ask them how their week has been/ Has anything good or not so good happened?

Read together The Huge Bag of Worries and sensitively talk about things which may be worrying them and making them weary at this time. Discuss if they feel they are weighed down with a huge bag of worries.

OR

Use a copy of the words and music for the Fischy Music song Bring it all to me, which can be found on their CD entitled Bring it all to me. Teach the children the actions for the song and then sing it through together. Note that you may wish to sing this at the end of your session too as a reminder of what you have been talking about this morning, even if you used the story option.

Use either as a way into the story and the way that the children are able to take everything good or not so good to Jesus.

## games

### Yoked!

all age

*You will need: hose or stretchy fabric.*

A classic three-legged race using a stretchy fabric for safety.

God's compassion with us and for us leads us to have compassion for others and calls us to share each other's burdens as God shares ours. A three-legged race is an excellent way to demonstrate cooperation and shared experience.

### Ricochet Ball And Balloon Bounce

all age

*You will need: bouncy balls, balloons, and a Ricochet Oddball or Waboba Street Ball if you can find one.*

Divide into groups of five to eight. Starting with a balloon, see how long your group can keep the balloon from touching the ground using only one tap each. Add limitations and variations depending upon the skill, size, and age of the group. Change the rules for use with a bouncy ball. In this variation allow the ball to bounce only once on the ground between each catch. Add a Ricochet Odd Ball or Waboba Street Ball for older groups. These pet toys bounce in irregular patterns making them more challenging to catch.

This game helps promote cooperation and communication.

## activities

### Shoot The Moon

age 9-12

*You will need: heavy twine, lightweight balls of various sizes, and baskets/bowls/bins.*

This is a group version of the classic "Shoot the Moon" folk-game. Divide into pairs and give each pair a 15ft length of twine and a lightweight ball. Stretch the cord to make a set of rope rail upon which the ball can roll. Practice rolling the ball back and forth. A more advanced goal can be to drop the ball into the basket. Further complexity can be added by using smaller and smaller balls.

A video example can be found here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWna2iuqA\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWna2iuqA_s).

The game promotes listening and patience. The only way to achieve the goals of the activity is through cooperation and compassion.

### The Ox Yoke Puzzle

all age

*You will need: heavy-duty cardboard, scissors, sturdy twine, duct tape, white glue, and metal washers.*

The classic wooden folk-puzzle Solomon's Seal is known by many names, including the Ox-Yoke Puzzle. We will not spoil the puzzle by solving it for you but constructing a rough version from heavy-duty cardboard is quite easy and provides a big clue to the solution. Tape or glue several layers of cardboard together to form a semi-ridged board. (Cut it in the shape of a yoke if you are feeling fancy). Cut three generous holes in the board; one on the left, one on the right, and a larger hole in the middle. Placing the ends of the string together, pull them through the central hole and then back through the resulting loop. Place a washer on each end of the string and tie the ends to the end holes. The goal is to move the washers together without untying the string.

Using the puzzle and a visual example, talk about the dual nature of yokes. Yokes can be restraining, but they also share burdens and make heavy loads more comfortable to carry. We can understand the yoke of Christ as a way of sharing our burdens with Christ and as a way of helping others carry heavy loads. Encourage the children to help each other think of solutions to the puzzle rather than trying to work it out for themselves.



# age group ideas

## crafts

### Friends To Help

age 3-5

*You will need: long chenille pipe-cleaners in a variety of colours, ribbon, and scissors.*

Talk to the children about the story and get them to think about who helped the children or who helped the little girl when they were feeling down. Get them to think about who might help them when they feel down (such as parents, relatives, or friends). Discuss who they might be able to help if they were feeling down and how they would help them. Talk about how Jesus said we could share our worries with him when we feel down as we would with a friend, and he would help us to feel better or give us 'rest'.

Give the children three different coloured pipe-cleaners representing them, a friend, and Jesus. Adjust the length of the pipe-cleaners for the size of their wrists and ask them to plait them together into a friendship bracelet by twisting one over the other. When in a plait get them to twist the ends together to make the bracelet. The ends can then be secured and covered by adding a ribbon and tying into a bow.

Talk about how when they are feeling worried or low they can look to their bracelet as a reminder to share their worries with Jesus, by praying; and with their friends, by talking to them.

### Finding Rest

age 6-8

*You will need: paper plates (uncoated if possible), glitter glue, coloured beads (in an assortment of shapes and sizes), hole punch, ribbon, and scissors.*

Give each child a plate and ask them to write the individual letters of the word 'R-E-S-T' across the plate with the glitter glue—it can be diagonally, horizontally, any angle. Then let them place coloured beads onto the glitter glue to spell out the word in beads. Leave to dry and once dry, punch a hole at the top and thread through a ribbon to allow for hanging.

Talk with the children about times when they have been feeling a little worried or down and who helped them at that time. Discuss whether they have been a friend to someone and helped them when they were feeling down and what they did to help them. Talk about Jesus saying that if we were worried then he would give us rest and encourage them to think what that 'rest' might be.

### Worry Jar

age 9-12

*You will need: a glass jar for each child (lids are optional), Posca paint markers, ribbon, scissors, small slips of paper (approximately 8 cm x 8 cm), pens, pencils, PVA glue, and glue spreaders.*

Give each child a jar and ask them to write the words 'WORRY JAR' on one side in a decorative outline way and then fill in the letters with colour. If they wish they could decorate the back and sides of the jar too, but do not make it too attractive as it is a Worry Jar! Get them to cut a

contrasting length of ribbon and tie it around the rim of the jar. Depending on the style of jar you may need to glue the ribbon in place.

Talk with the children in a sensitive way about the things that worry them, the things which make them feel weighed down and perhaps a bit low. Get them to write each worry on a slip of paper and for the moment lay it in front of them.

If you used *The Huge Bag of Worries* story: talk about how the little girl finally managed to let go of her worries and get rest by sharing them with the old woman. Alternatively: using the story above, talk about how the mum encouraged the children to find rest by letting them take their worries and grumps to her.

Ask them to think about how they could get rest from their worries which they have laid out before them and encourage them to think of letting them go by giving them through prayer to Jesus, who said it was okay to bring them to him.

Talk of how they could scrunch up their worries one at a time as they let them go and then place the scrunched-up paper in their 'Worry Jar' as a symbol of letting them go. Let them do this with any worry they feel they could let go.



### A Yoke

all age

*You will need: a broom handle or length of wood, two plastic buckets, two short lengths of rope or duct tape, scissors, a variety of materials to carry, and some pictures of different kinds of yokes to show how they are used.*

Look together at the pictures of the yokes and discuss how and why they are used—to help people carry heavy loads. Get the children to think about whether they would find it easy or hard to carry a yoke which was full of a heavy weight. Ask them to think about what Jesus would have meant when he said that the yoke he asked people to carry was light.

Let the children work together to make a yoke by suspending a bucket at either side of the length of wood using the rope or duct tape. When all is secure and the yoke ready to use, let the children try carrying some heavy materials without the yoke and then with the yoke. Discuss the difference it made to carrying the weight.

If outside, play a game together with the children in teams where the children have to get a bundle of materials from one side to the other in the quickest time.

If indoors, a smaller yoke can be made by using a ruler, two yogurt pots and string. Make a hole in the centre bottom of the yogurt pot. Thread the string through the bottom of the yoghurt pot and knot underneath. Tie a pot to each end of the ruler.

# discussion starters for teens

## come to me

### Preparation

Gather the following: large sheet of paper, pens, materials to make a cross (such as candles, wood, or paper). Make invitation cards for everyone: an A5 sized sheet folded in half breadth-ways. On the outside, write each person's name. On the inside, write the quote: "Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

### Opening Activity

#### Generations

On a large sheet of paper, create two columns. One column should be titled 'Adults' and the other 'Children'.

Create a list of things each of these generations is able to do that the other cannot. You may begin with legal things like voting and driving or social media, virtual technology and so on.

Also consider physical things such as better range of hearing, more energy.

- How important, able, and capable in your own church community do you feel?
- Do you feel ignored or celebrated? Give examples of each of these.

### The Word

Read John 11:16-19,20-25 together.

There are two halves to the passage today.

Read verse 16: But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another.

- Do you hear this as an insult or talking about the 'innocence' of children?

The first hearers of this passage would have heard this as an insult. Children were not as included or prioritised as they are now. Children lacked know-how, wisdom, and their behaviour was inappropriate. Hold onto that thought.

Read verse 25: Jesus said, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants."

- How might the religious authorities have heard these last words?

Given they considered themselves wise and righteous, they would have heard these words as a threat.

- What do you think: who 'gets' the gospel better—adults or children?

Let the young people talk about their response to that question with examples or stories.



### Activity/Discussion

The final part of the reading offers an invitation, no matter what generation we are in, about handing over burdens. We carry a lot in life, and our mental health is so important to our overall wellbeing that it is important to be able to realise, in our faith, there is a way to share that burden.

This activity is a simple way of letting ourselves reflect and meditate on this and gives us the opportunity to 'hand over' what is too much for us: our weariness, our anxiety. This is not therapy but a way of recognising what sits heavily with us.

In a circle, light some candles in the shape of a cross, or with some wood (or other materials), create a cross. Play some music in the background such as James Blunt's *The Greatest* or A Great Big World's *One Step Ahead*. Pass around the invitation cards so that each person gets the one with their name on the front. Give them time to read what is inside and then read this aloud to everyone:

"Are there any here today who have never been weary? Never had to carry a heavy burden? Okay, you are free to go. Because today we are going to rest. We are going to learn from Jesus' heart a way of life that is gentle and humble. Set down the heavy burdens that life has given us and take up the gentler one of Jesus."

Invite everyone to spend a few minutes to 'project' into their card their worries rather than write them down and once they have done that, lay the card on the cross.

Once that has been done read out the following: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

### Living It Out

The verses we have not mentioned today are perhaps some of the most interesting: verses 18-19. John was known as a person who fasted and Jesus as a drunkard and a glutton. Basically, you cannot win! The truth is we will never be all things to all people. What is important is who we are to each other.



pentecost 6  
sunday 12 july 2020

# seeds spreading good news

## bible notes

### Broadcasting With Diligence

**T**he well-known Parable of the Sower takes on a different aspect in the light of current concerns about eco-diversity. We have been used to reading it with a certain sense of superiority, modern farming methods being so much more efficient than the random hand-scattering of seed by the farmer in the story.

Industrial ploughs and drills ensure that every inch of soil is used and every seed goes exactly where it is meant to. Powerful chemicals deal with any weeds, and bio-engineering has produced seeds with vastly improved and consistent yield. Only relatively recently have we begun to count up the high price that has been paid for such efficiency. The loss of hedgerows has led to a huge decline in all species of insects and birds, and the disappearance of many. There is a worrying shortage of essential pollinators, such as bees. Poisonous traces have entered the food chain from pesticides and weed-killers. Concentration on the most productive varieties of seeds means that there are no alternatives if these become affected by disease.

Removing the blinkers which have caused us to focus only on the seed which landed in the 'good soil' and became productive, we can now see the parable not as an injunction to be single-minded about our missionary efforts, but as a proclamation of God's prodigal generosity.

The method of sowing outlined in the parable is 'broadcasting': a term that was adopted in the early days of radio and television to describe the transmission of sounds and images over invisible airwaves. The internet has added a vast range of new ways in which information—and misinformation—can be disseminated instantly throughout the world.

Genesis 25:19-34

Psalms 119:1-5-112

Romans 8:1-11

**Matthew 13:1-9,18-23**

As in the parable, many of the 'seeds' of information and experience sown in this way are good and life-giving. Horrendous as the coronavirus pandemic has been (it is still in its early stages as I write), it would have been infinitely worse without modern means of communication to keep us informed, and social media to keep us in touch with one another during long periods of enforced isolation. Not all seeds are good, however, and not every good seed bears the fruit that we hoped for. Messages can become corrupted; lies can be spread as easily as truth; and vulnerable people, old and young, can be abused and exploited using the very same tools that are so vital for their support and wellbeing.

That is just how it is. It is up to the farmer—and to us—to create the best possible conditions for growth, to deal with the weeds and thorns as they appear, and to leave the rest to nature and to God.

It is worth noting that this is a story about sowing, and not about harvesting. As church membership declines, we have talked a lot about mission, but often this is shorthand for any means that will get more people into the church—especially young people—and enable the institution to survive. We look at other denominations, and churches in other countries, that appear to be 'successful', and try to copy what they are doing, rather than focussing on the quality of our seed, the depth of our soil and the diligence of our watering and weeding. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3: "Each one of us does the work which God gave us to do... Neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth."



# the story

## God's Broadcast

*A retelling of the Parable of the Sower with an unresolved ending, and a chance to follow up with questions for reflection/ discussion.*

God's broadcast to the world: "I love you!"  
People heard, but many did not understand.  
"What is love? What does it look like?"  
Who will help us understand?"  
No one would help them understand  
and so they forgot God's message.

God's broadcast to the world: "I love you!"  
People heard.  
Some were helped in their understanding.  
"Love? Now I see it—patient, kind and good!"  
Where can we go to see more of it?"  
But no one invited them into community  
where they could belong and put down roots  
and so they forgot God's message.

God's broadcast to the world: "I love you!"  
People heard.  
Some were helped in their understanding  
and invited into community  
where they began to feel they belonged  
and could put down roots.  
But no one listened to their deep questions  
about security and worth.  
"How can we trust in love and community  
when the world promises safety in wealth  
and soothes our anxieties with possessions?"  
And so they forgot God's message.

God's broadcast to the world: "I love you!"  
People heard.  
Some were helped in their understanding  
and invited into community  
where they began to feel they belonged  
and could put down roots.  
Their deep questions about security and worth  
were listened to and they found courage  
to trust in love and community  
even when the world promised safety in wealth  
and soothed anxieties with possessions.  
But no one asked much of their time and their talents  
and there was no fruit  
from the seeds God had planted within them.

## Optional Discussion/Reflection Questions

- Who and what has helped us:
  - to understand who God is and what God is like?
  - to become rooted in a community of faith, where we know we belong?
  - to wrestle with questions of what we value and how we come find our security and worth in God?
  - to bear the fruits of love in our lives?
- What can we do to more effectively get alongside others in their understanding, rootedness, exploring of values and bearing fruit?

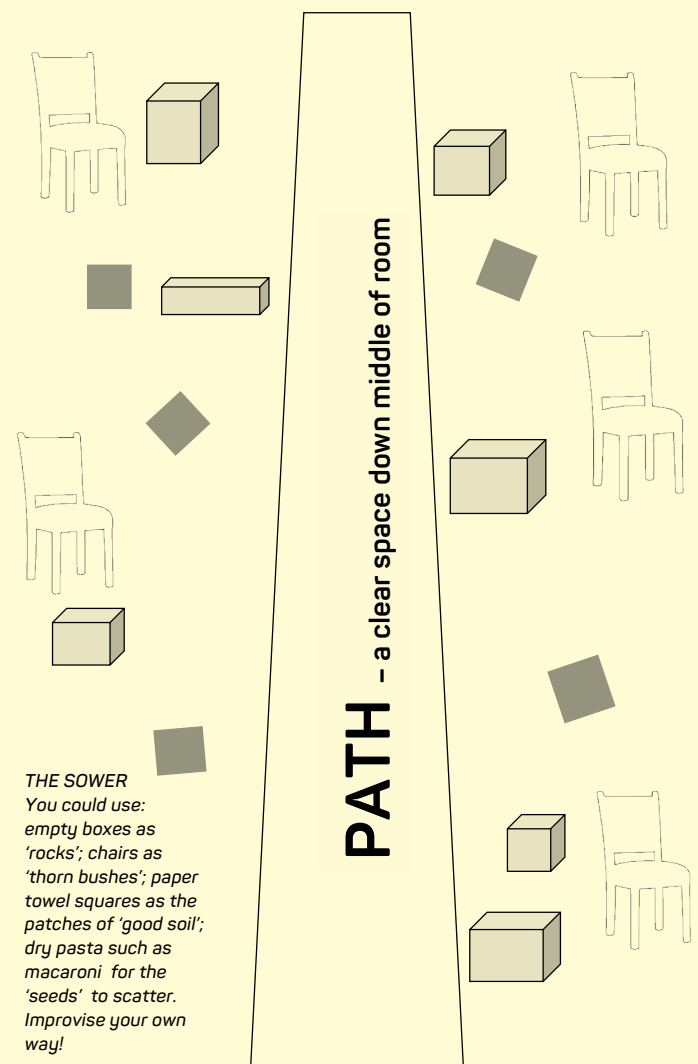
## Retelling For Young People

### The Sower In Action

*Tell the story from a children's Bible.*

*Then act it out (see room plan ideas below). Hard paths, rocks and thorny bushes were commonplace in the farmland known to Jesus, and deeper 'good soil' may have been patchy in places. Set up your room or hall using boxes and chairs (or whatever is at hand) to represent the rocks and thorny bushes, with a clear 'path' down the middle.*

*Place kitchen roll squares or suchlike on the floor as the patches of good soil. Then have one of the children broadcast their seed (a bowl of uncooked macaroni will do nicely!) and see how many land on the path, the rocks, the thorns and the good soil! Take turns, either using different kinds of 'seed' or doing quick cleanups and counts between each turn.*



# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Invite people to look around the place of worship for plants that have been grown and placed there for everyone's pleasure. Perhaps there is a potted plant that is looking rather withered, forgotten about and not watered for a while. Perhaps there are some flowers, lovingly and kindly placed on display at the front of the sanctuary. Encourage worshippers to take some time to go and admire them close up or to observe the less edifying plant pot. Look at the stems, the leaves, the petals, the stamen. Look at the water, the soil, the withered leaves. Perhaps smell them or gently touch them. Hold these experiences in your mind as you listen to the Gospel lesson.

## Call to Worship

Leader: The seed is sown and the crop is grown.  
**All: Come, Lord, strengthen us as we grow in you.**

Leader: The rain hydrates and the sun radiates.  
**All: Come, Lord, quench our thirst in the warmth of your love.**

Leader: The land is tilled and the flour milled.  
**All: Come, Lord, refine us by your Spirit.**

Leader: Come let us worship the Living God  
as the seed of the Word is sown  
here with us today.

## Prayer of Dedication

Most generous God,  
you lavish your love upon us and all people:  
with no thought to who deserves it,  
and no guarantee that it will be returned.  
You give: it is what you do.  
You love: it is who you are.

We call ourselves your people,  
and we want to be more like you.  
Help us to cast caution to the wind,  
along with our gifts of substance, love, and action;  
then let us wait to celebrate with you,  
when the harvest comes in.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God our Maker, source of all that is,  
in this vast universe, and possibly more besides,  
if we are, as we fondly imagine,  
the pinnacle of creation;  
if everything else is there  
only to make our existence possible,  
then your handiwork is wasteful indeed.  
Much more likely, and more wonderful still,  
is that we are as small and insignificant as we feel,  
and yet you love us, and care about our good.  
And if there are other beings in other worlds,  
they also are held within your loving care.

God, we cannot comprehend the scale of it all,  
far less the mystery of your being,  
but fortunately we do not need to.  
All that you require of us is to take care  
of our tiny fragment of this small blue planet;  
for the miniscule moment of time that we are here,  
and this, we have hopelessly failed to do.

We thought we could improve the earth:  
by making it more efficient,  
Taking and using all that we wanted,  
getting rid of everything that stood in our way.  
Forgive us, we pray: the vanished hedgerows,  
the skies empty of soaring larks,  
the silence where bees once buzzed,  
over wildflowers on missing meadows.

Teach us to be less wasteful:  
in our sharing of the earth's resources,  
and in our giving of ourselves.  
Never mind if some of what we sow is lost,  
or grows only for a while.  
Never mind if birds and beasts take their share.  
Never mind if some of the seeds we sow,  
will be for future generations to harvest.  
All of that is as you meant it to be.

God of seedtime and harvest,  
of summer growth and winter rest:  
help us to do our part in broadcasting the seeds  
of your love and goodness  
throughout this good Earth,  
for the blessing of all,  
and to the glory of your name.  
Amen.

## Prayer for Others and Ourselves

God of wanton grace and profligate love,  
we give thanks for all the good gifts  
you have showered upon us:  
in creation,  
in each other,  
and especially in Jesus,  
whose stories help us to see the world differently;  
whose life was the living embodiment of your love;  
whose death was a seed which is bearing harvest still.

We pray for farmers, who work night and day,  
to bring produce from the land:  
those in poor lands  
who struggle to survive;  
those in rich places  
who feel isolated and lonely,  
and whose future is also insecure.

God who scatters love as generously on your world  
as the farmer scattered seed on the land,  
we give thanks for all that enabled us to grow and thrive,  
if we were fortunate: in body, mind and soul.  
We pray for children  
who do not have the nurture they need in early years,  
and for parents  
who cannot provide what they did not know.  
God of love, make up every deficit of love, we pray,  
and enable us to be co-workers in this field.

In an age when not just seeds are broadcast,  
but images and sounds,  
news and opinions,  
helpful information and cruel lies,  
we give thanks for all the good and vital connections,  
that social media has made possible,  
and pray for those who have been harmed  
by something with so much potential for good.

We pray for young people  
concerned already about the future of the planet,  
who must now be wondering even more,  
what sort of life lies ahead for them and their children;  
and for older people,  
forced to question all that they thought was secure.  
May we find our security and our hope in you,  
whose love is in all, and for all,  
and available always in plentiful supply.  
Amen.





# worship ideas

## All-Age Prayer

God, we thank you:  
for the farmers who sow the seeds,  
for the millers who grind them into flour,  
for the bakers who make the flour into bread,  
for us to eat and enjoy.

We pray for people in poorer countries,  
and even here in *PLACE* who do not have enough to eat.  
Help us to be generous,  
and to share what we have with them.

If our world is a field, and we are like farmers  
sowing the seed and looking after it,  
help us to do our work well.  
May we sow seeds of kindness and goodness,  
gentleness and love, and wait patiently,  
to bring in a rich harvest of joy.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

*Inspired by the Dayenu, a Jewish thanksgiving prayer  
used at Passover.*

One garden would have been fine, Lord,  
with two people in it,  
some vegetables,  
fruit and flowers,  
and a small assortment of domestic animals;  
but, no, you told them to go forth and multiply,  
and they did!

One world would have been ample, Lord,  
filled with animals, fish, insects, and birds,  
people of every tongue and hue; but, no,  
our tiny planet is one of countless millions,  
stretching out to infinity and beyond!

One nation would have been plenty to care for,  
and many have imagined they were the one;  
but not enough for you, Lord.  
You love the world and every person in it:  
those who believe and those who don't,  
those who are kind and those who are cruel,  
you love them all—equally.

It would have been enough, Lord,  
to tell us how much you love us.  
You could have inspired a psalmist or two,  
to praise your love in song; but, no,  
you came and lived a life of love;  
and for love's sake you died.

It would have been enough, Lord,  
to set a good example;  
to show us how to live more gently on the earth;  
but, no, you sent your spirit,  
to change us from the inside out.

Would it be enough, Lord, if we were to meet:  
one day in seven, just for an hour or so,  
to read your word and sing your praise?  
And if anyone wanted to join us,  
they would be more than welcome.  
No, Lord, thought not!  
Help us to be extravagant in our living,  
and generous in our loving.  
Amen.



## Reflection

*The traditional town crier would call for silence in the marketplace by ringing a bell and calling out "Oyez!" which is an old Anglo-Norman word for "listen".*

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!  
Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!

We have news to tell, good news for all,  
news to spread far and wide.

Oyez! Oyez!  
Hear ye! Hear ye!

God's love is for everyone,  
God's care is for you and me,  
God's generosity is overflowing,  
God's compassion is abundant.

Oyez!  
Hear ye!

God's justice is for all,  
especially those discriminated against;  
God's provision is for all,  
especially those denied access to the harvest;  
God's welcome is for all,  
especially those who are scorned;  
God's comfort is for all,  
especially those who grieve;  
God's hope is for all,  
especially those who have given up.

Oyez! Oyez!  
Hear ye! Hear ye!

God sows the seeds of love,  
God grows the seeds of care,  
God shows the seeds of generosity,  
God knows the seeds of compassion.

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!  
Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!

Go, spread the seeds of God's good news  
with abandon and grace!

## Take Home Ideas

Tears for Fears released the song *Sowing the Seeds of Love* in 1989. Listen to the song (easily found on YouTube, Spotify, Google or iTunes) and, as it plays in the background, use those minutes to consider this week's Gospel passage.

- How does God seek today that we sow the seeds of his love in our churches, community, and world?
- How do we 'broadcast' his message amidst the noise of life?
- What might subdue the message getting across and what do we need to do to overcome this?

## Sending

Go and sow,  
go and scatter,  
go and spread  
the Word of God is for the world;  
the Word of God is the song of love for all.

## Praise/Hymns

All things bright and beautiful	CH4 137 / MP 23
Come, ye thankful people, come	CH4 233 / MP 106
Dance and sing, all the earth	<i>Heaven Shall Not Wait</i> , WGP
For the beauty of the earth	CH4 181 / MP 152
For the fruits of all creation	CH4 231 / MP 153
God, whose farm is all creation	CH4 226
God's will for creation	CH4 146
In love you summon	<i>There Is One Among Us</i> , WGP
Morning has broken	CH4 212 / MP 467
O Lord my God	CH4 154 / MP 506
Think of a world without any flowers	CH4 155
We have a gospel to proclaim	CH4 363 / MP 728
We will walk with God my brothers	CH4 803
Will you come and follow me?	CH4 533
What shall we offer our good Lord	online at <a href="https://hymnary.org/text/what_shall_we_offer_our_good_lord">https://hymnary.org/text/what_shall_we_offer_our_good_lord</a> suggested tune: Duke Street
You shall go out with joy	CH4 804 / MP 796

# age group ideas

## gathering

### What Might Grow?

all age

*You will need: many different types of seeds (mustard, sunflower, pumpkin, variety of flowers, and so on), pictures of the plants that will grow from them.*

*Note: use child-friendly seeds and ensure children do not try to eat them!*

Gather together seeds of different sizes, shapes, and varieties and let the children explore them. Encourage the children to think what might grow from each type of seed, how tall the plant might be, and what it might look like when it is fully grown.

Share some pictures of the mature seeds with the children to let them see if they were accurate in their thinking. Then have a discussion together about what the seeds need to grow to maturity. Use this as a way into the story.



## games

### Seed Speed

age 6-12

*You will need: chopsticks, roasted sunflower seeds, and cups.*

In this relay race, divide the group into teams. Each team will have one set of chopsticks. Each member of the team will move seeds from one cup to another using only the chopsticks. The first team to move all their seeds wins.

It can be hard to share God's love with one another if we focus on the outcome rather than love. We love one another because God first loved us!

### Silly Seeds

age 6-12

*You will need: chopsticks and roasted sunflower seeds.*

A variation of "Hot Potato" using chopsticks and sunflower seeds. When the music stops, the person holding the seed or looking for the seed steps out of the circle.

Unlike in the game, God's love is sown far and wide for us. We do not earn it; we only share it.

## activities

### Shower The People You Love With Love

age 3-5

*You will need: ability to play James Taylor's classic song "Shower The People", bubble mix.*

Have a quick bubble party outside with James Taylor's song playing in the background.

We are not called to earn God's grace, only to share God's love. God is love, and there can be no shortage of love. God showers love upon us all, like bubbles upon the wind or seeds cast upon the field. We are called to help each other to know and share that love.

### Sowing Post-Its Of Love

age 6-12

*You will need: Post-It notes, pens.*

Ask each child to write encouraging words of love on three or four post-it notes. Brainstorm creative ways of sharing these notes with the congregation, friends, or family. Perhaps they could be placed in the order of service or featured in a power-point presentation? Could they be left on hymnals or handed out before the offering?

God calls us to share the love that Christ sows.



# crafts

## Hidden Seeds

age 3-5

*You will need: a batch of plain cupcakes, chocolate buttercream icing, Matchmaker chocolates, ready-made fondant icing (in green, yellow, and red), Smarties or M&Ms, and knives for spreading and cutting.*

Show the children how to take a disc out of the top of a cupcake keeping the disc intact and making the hole deep enough for one of the Smarties or M&Ms to fit inside. Give them each a cupcake and let them remove their disc. Give them each one of the Smarties or M&Ms to place inside the hole and then pop the disc back on top. Let them cover the top of the cake with the chocolate buttercream icing. Give them each half of a long Matchmaker and some green fondant icing. Have them to cut out a few leaves with a short stalk to attach to the Matchmaker stem by wrapping the stalks around it and securing in place. Let them fashion a small flower head from the red or yellow icing and attach this to the top of their Matchmaker stem. When these are secure, push the Matchmaker stem securely into the buttercream icing on top of the cake as if the plant has grown from the seed inside.

Talk about the story, God sowing seeds of love, and hoping they will grow as healthily as their flower. Talk about how they might sow seeds of love and how we might know if those seeds are growing.

## The Sower And The Seed

age 6-8

*You will need: A4 coloured card, a ruler, pencils, felt pens, coloured pencils, PVA glue, glue spreaders, scraps of brown cloth, thorny twigs or short lengths of old Christmas tree branches, scraps of grey cloth, tiny stones, seeds, coloured paper, and scissors.*

Give each child a piece of card and ask them to lay it portrait in front of them. Now ask them to divide it into five sections by measuring down 6 cm from the top and then drawing a line straight across, then another 6 cm down and draw a line and so on until they have reached the bottom of the page and have their five sections. In the first section let them write the words 'The Sower and the Seed' in fancy lettering. In the next get them to cut a piece of the brown cloth and glue it in place as the 'Good Soil' before adding some flowers and plants using the coloured paper. Next let them attach a thorny twig or piece of Christmas tree branch to represent the seeds that fell among the thorns. In the next section get them to cut the grey cloth like a path, glue it on, and add some small stones by gluing them on top. Finally, get them to cut another piece of brown cloth and glue it on, then let them glue on some seeds and make some pictures of birds eating the seeds.

Talk about the story and what happened to each of the seeds that fell on the different types of land. Talk about the seeds being like the seeds of God's love being sown around us and get them to think about how we might see if those seeds of God's love are actually growing around us.



## Sowing Seeds Of Love

age 9-12

*You will need: copies of the instructions for creating origami seed packets found on [page 114](#), coloured paper (15 cm x 15 cm), felt pens, self-stick stickers, seeds.*

Give each child a piece of the coloured paper and an instruction sheet and let them make their seed pouch. When it is completed get them to decorate their pouch. Then give each child some seeds to place in their pouch. Encourage them to share these seeds with someone as a reminder to them of sharing the seeds of God's love.

Talk with the children about the story. Talk about the seeds in the story being like the seeds of God's love and the different ways God's love might be received. Discuss the ways they think we might see God's love growing around us today in our communities and ask them to think about ways in which those seeds of God's love might be stifled. Talk about how they can be a part of sowing those seeds of God's love and encourage them to think of ways they themselves might sow those seeds of love.

## Colourful Planter

all age

*You will need: a large planter (or two), compost, trowels, watering can, colourful bedding plants, and some trailing plants (including a few withered or 'weedy' looking plants for comparison, if possible).*

Lay out the planter and ask the children to work together to fill it three-quarters full of compost. Look together at the height and spread of each plant and let them decide where the best place to put each plant in the planter might be. Get them to place them on top first and agree they like the layout before then getting them to plant the plants in the compost. Let them top up the compost around the plants and water them into place, before then deciding where to place the planter so people can see it and be reminded of God's love.

Talk to the children about each of your chosen plants and give them the names of the plants. Discuss with the children which of them they think would have grown from a seed or a corm or a bulb. Discuss how healthy each plant looks and ask the children to think about what would have made them so healthy (for example: good soil, good watering, good nurturing).

Now get them to think about the story and what might have happened to the plants had they been planted in bad soil or among rocks. If you have them, look at the withered, 'weedy' plants for inspiration and discuss their opinions. Talk about how the story tells us of God planting his seeds of love in our world and ask them to think about how they might know if God's love is growing healthily in our world today. What are the signs of God's love that they might see?

# discussion starters for teens

## good, thorny, rocky, hard

### Preparation

You will need pictures of (or real) fruit with seeds, plus a banana and a pineapple. If you are using the video to tell the story this can be found at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb7bvF5Ucrk>.

Have four large sheets (A2 or A1) each decorated or titled as one of the four soils: good, stony, weeds, and hard.

### Opening Activity

#### Where Are The Seeds?

Provide some pictures of fruit and ask where the seeds are in each. For example: apples, oranges, pears.

What about a banana? There are no seeds in a banana.

What about a pineapple? Again, commercial pineapples do not have seeds.

So how do you grow these fruits? Bananas: you take the rhizome from the host plant and cultivate it. Pineapple: you can use the top of the plant in the soil.

### The Word

You can tell the story (Matthew 13:1-9,18-23) in a variety of ways today:

1. Use different voices when describing each of the different soils.
2. Find a video online that tells the story. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tb7bvF5Ucrk>)
3. Have everyone re-enact the parable.

### Activity/Discussion

- Is the parable about seed or about soil?

Often we focus on the outcome, which is excessive because even the least (the 30 fold) is far beyond what the first hearers would expect from their land. They would expect four or five fold, which makes this a story of excessive generosity. What is significant is that generosity comes from even the seed that falls on the worst soil.

Think about the four soils: good, thorny, rocky, and hard.

- Which one are you and why? Offer some examples.

In truth, at different points in life we are probably all four.

- When do we feel downtrodden and hard-hearted like the soil on the path?
- When do we feel stunted in our creativity or life by bad luck or bad influences like the stony ground?
- When have we had the initial burst of enthusiasm only to lose that energy quite quickly like the seed among the weeds and thorns?



- And when have we managed to put down roots and stretch ourselves for the sake of others?

Take the four sheets, each representing a different soil, and write across them examples from each person's lives where they have experience of that kind of soil. This is a time to be honest and open because each of us share these same experiences.

The good news is that even in these places where we feel less than who we are meant to be, there is the invitation to produce a harvest.

### Living It Out

The parable invites us to have two good ears and to be open to each of the soils having a make-over: having the stones removed, the weeds pulled, and the hard places ploughed.

Invite some silence for everyone to review the four sheets and to reflect on how they might bring back into use the land that is stony, impacted, and pushed out by thorns back into production.

- The final question is how might we help each other in doing this?



pentecost 7  
sunday 19 july 2020

# seeds struggling for space

## bible notes

### Goodies Vs Baddies?

In the old-fashioned Westerns, there was no difficulty knowing who the heroes were, who the villains were, and who would triumph in the end. The principal 'goodie' wore a white hat, the 'baddie' wore a black hat, and good had always conquered by the time the credits rolled. Would that life were as simple as it used to be in the cinema or as it is in some of Jesus' parables; such as this one.

The parable of the weeds, unlike the parable of the sower, which precedes it, tackles the universal theological issue of theodicy: why, if God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good, is there evil in the world? In the previous parable, the rocks, shallow soil, and thorn bushes are simply there: part of the way life is. The 'evil one' is mentioned in the interpretation, but not in the parable itself. The parable of the weeds, by contrast, is told for the very purpose of explaining what has gone wrong—where the intrusive weeds have come from, if the farmer planted only good seed.

The answer given in the parable, and spelled out in the interpretation, is both simplistic and verging on dualism. Essentially, the farmer, or the Son of Man, is let off the hook by saying "It wisnae me—a bad boy came and done it!" (with apologies to non-Scots). The weeds have been planted by 'some enemy' during the night.

For theologians and natural historians alike, this is quite unsatisfactory. It is often said that there is no such thing as a weed—only a plant in the wrong place—and we are acutely aware now of the importance of biological diversity. People are not wholly good or wholly evil; we all have the potential

for both. Good intentions can result in bad consequences, and vice versa. To put it more crudely, 's\*\*\* happens!'. If God is the source of all life, then responsibility for those aspects that cause problems for human beings, be they weeds or deadly viruses, cannot so easily be handed over to an unknown enemy.

In the context in which the story was recorded, however, all of this matters much less. For a 1st century Christian community; suffering persecution, wondering why Jesus had not returned to establish the Kingdom as he promised; what matters is to reassure them that they have not been wrong to put their trust in him. This may not be how they had imagined their future, as followers of Jesus, to be, but the kingdom has always been a slippery concept, confounding human expectations. That is why we are given not one, but multiple parables, each revealing a different facet of something that cannot ultimately be defined.

What was important then, as it is now, is to go on trusting that God, as revealed and personified in Jesus, the 'Son of Man', can be trusted, and has not abandoned his people. We may look for subtler explanations than this one of the origins of evil; we may not want to wait until 'the end of the age' for justice to be done; but we need, as much as ever, to be encouraged to 'keep on keeping on': doing our best not to be discouraged by the weeds, looking for and nurturing the shoots of new growth when they appear, and leaving the final outcomes to God.

Genesis 28:10-19a  
Psalm 139:1-12,23-24  
Romans 8:12-25  
**Matthew 13:24-30,36-43**



# the story

## The Seeds And The Weeds

*A script for three voices.*

Narrator: Jesus told them a story. He said,  
"the kingdom of heaven is like someone who  
sowed good seed in a field".

Voice A: I am a wheat seed.  
I am a good seed.  
The sower sowed me,  
in his field.

Voice B: I am a weed.  
That just means I am a seed,  
growing where somebody  
doesn't want me to grow...  
but I am going to grow there anyway!

Voice A: I am a good seed.  
I will bear grain.  
The weeds are annoying me.  
They're getting tangled up with my roots.  
They should not be here!

Voice B: I am a weed.  
I like this field.  
The soil is good.  
Pity I have to share it with the wheat,  
but I'll survive.  
I'm strong.

Voice A: The gardeners thought about  
pulling up the weeds,  
but they can't kill the weeds  
Without killing me too.  
Looks like the weeds are here to stay.

Voice B: What a cheek!  
I'll stay all right!  
I reckon I'm safe here.  
They're not going to pull me up.  
It is a good place to be.

Narrator: And so the wheat and the weeds  
grew together until the harvest time.

Voice A: I am a wheat seed.  
I have grown well.  
My ears are full of grain.  
I am ready for the harvest.

Voice B: I am a weed.  
I have grown well.  
My roots have gone down deep.  
My flowers are in full bloom.

Narrator: Soon will come the harvest  
and the weeds will be up-rooted,  
tied into bundles and burnt,  
and the grain will be gathered into the barn.

Voice A: I am a good wheat seed.

Voice B: I am a beautiful weed.

Narrator: Let anyone with ears, listen.

## Retelling For Young People

### One Person's Weed Is Another's Beauty

Jesus told a story about weeds and wheat growing together in a field. The roots of the weeds and wheat got so mixed up that the farmer could not pull out the weeds, or he would have pulled up the wheat as well. So, the plants grew together until it was time to harvest the wheat. Then the farmer kept the grain that had grown from the wheat seeds and he burned the weeds in a big bonfire.

Someone once said that a weed is a plant growing in the wrong place. A lot of gardeners do not like dandelions growing in their lawn, but they don't mind looking at them when they are growing by the side of the road.

Not everyone thinks that weeds are a nuisance. Some people think that they are beautiful.

Have a look at some weeds/pictures of weeds and see what you think.

Some weeds are very strong. Grass and dandelions often push their way up through concrete and paving stones.

- Do you have a garden?
- What kind of weeds grow in it?
- What kinds of seeds do you plant?

There is a good story you might enjoy about weeds and seeds. It is called *"A Day's Work"* by Eve Bunting.





# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Front line workers are critical to our society. We perhaps did not recognise how much before the global pandemic. Shopkeepers and superstores are places for which we are grateful all the more for the produce they stock for us.

Prior to worshipping today, then, take some time to consider your kitchen. What food do you have there that grew from a seed? Foods such as tomatoes, peppers, and apples are all produced by farmers who are still working away. The shelves and vans are carefully packed, and food is distributed to get to our homes. Be thankful for the varied colours, scents, and textures of what you have. And say a wee prayer for those who helped stock your larder.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Church buildings,  
sacred spaces,  
gather us together.

**All: Together (in isolation) we gather as one,  
though physically apart.  
God be with us in our houses and homes,  
just as God is with us  
in our churches and cathedrals.**

Leader: Come. Let us worship  
as God's scattered community.

**All: As the farmer scatters the seed  
may the fruits of the Spirit  
be plentiful among us,  
wherever we may be.**

## Prayer of Dedication

Bountiful God,  
of all the gifts that you have given,  
the greatest and most mysterious is life itself.

Refusing to be tamed or quashed,  
it sprouts in the gutters,  
pushes up through the pavement cracks,  
and bursts out as new green shoots  
from seemingly barren stumps.

May we nurture the life that you have given us,  
and allow it to flourish in the world.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Creator God,  
you are the source of all that is:  
the life in every living thing;  
birds and beasts; fish and fowl;  
crops and the locusts that devour them;  
trees and the diseases that threaten them;  
wildflowers, which are beautiful in one place,  
and troublesome weeds in another.  
You made them all, and you made us:  
not wholly good or wholly bad,  
but full of creative potential, which, like yours,  
can be used for good or for harm;  
squandered or never allowed to flourish.

We come to you today,  
not so much to make our confession,  
as to open ourselves up to your inspection:  
ready to be surprised  
by the good that may reveal;  
hoping not to be too discouraged  
by what is harmful and what needs to be changed.

But first, we need to open our eyes and look,  
with you, at the ripening harvest of our lives.  
What shoots of new growth can we see?  
What is there in us that is stronger  
and healthier than it was before?

Let us give thanks: with God and to God,  
for every growth in grace; every lesson learned;  
every kindness shown; every struggle overcome.  
let us ask for help to nurture and encourage  
every seed of life that God has planted.  
And now, as we continue looking inwards,  
what else can we see?  
Are there weeds of tiredness or frustration;  
thorns of envy or of fear that threaten  
to choke the life of the kingdom, growing in us?

Let us acknowledge, before God,  
the dangers that we face  
and the temptations that draw us.  
Let us promise not to feed these weeds with our time  
or water them with our attention,  
but to trust God, the farmer, to deal with them,  
when the time is right.

Lord of all life, may the seeds of your kingdom,  
grow in us, and be allowed to flourish,  
and may we share with all your faithful people  
in the joy of the harvest feast.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Living God, we give thanks for all the good things,  
that we have seen grow in the course of our lives,  
sometimes in the most unpromising of soil;  
for difficult times which have helped us  
to understand the difficulties that other people face;  
for painful losses which have helped us  
to value people and things that do not last for ever;  
for hard questions that have led us more deeply  
Into the mystery of our faith.

We give thanks for farmers and fishing crews;  
for all who grow food, and catch it,  
prepare it, transport it, market and sell it,  
so that we can enjoy an abundance,  
that we too easily take for granted.

We pray for those whose livelihoods are at risk,  
and whose children this week may not be fed.  
May we emerge from this time of hardship  
with a new appreciation of all that we have  
and a new determination to make this world  
a fairer place for all.

We give thanks for those who sow seeds  
of faith, of hope and of imagination,  
when those gifts are in short supply.  
May their work bear a rich harvest.  
Gladly, we think of those who cheer us  
by singing in the darkness;  
those who draw us gently into their laughter,  
and help us to smile at ourselves;  
those who pray for us,  
when we have forgotten how to pray for ourselves.

Gracious God, we pray for the church of Jesus Christ,  
charged with representing him in the world,  
and with tending the fragile seeds of his kingdom.  
Help us not to be distracted by the weeds,  
but to focus on the fresh, green shoots of new life.  
May we not choke that life with the tangled thorns  
of our rules and regulations,  
of our doctrines and dogmas and clever future plans.  
Keep us faithful in our planting, our watering,  
and our waiting for the rich harvest  
that is your glory and your gift.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

God, we come today:  
carrying a heavy bag of labels  
that other people have put on us,  
and that we have taken upon ourselves.  
One by one, we lay them down,  
or throw them as far into the distance  
as they will go.

'She's the clever one'.

'He's the shy one'.

'What a good boy!'

'You're just trouble!'

Too thin; too fat; too lazy;

too stupid; too clever for your own good.

Living God, we stand before you,  
freed from all that clutter,  
allowing you to see us as we are,  
and to draw out of us  
all that we may yet become.

We need only one label:  
we are your own beloved children.  
Thanks be to God!  
Amen.



## Reflective Prayer

Why is there so much evil in the world?  
Where did it come from?  
Who is to blame?  
When will justice finally be done?  
What does it all mean?

Mighty God, we fritter away our time, and yours;  
we singe our neural connections  
and weary our souls  
asking questions that have no answers,  
or none that satisfy.

Thank you for our freedom to pester you in prayer  
and for your patience in listening.  
Help us to know when to persist in our asking  
and when to let go;  
when to challenge the simple stories of our faith,  
when to enter into them  
and let them challenge and change us.

Still our minds, we pray, and sow in us  
the good seed of the kingdom.  
May the birds not steal it, nor the weeds choke it;  
may it have water and sunlight,  
and good soil in which to grow.  
And by and by, when the time is right,  
may you reap in us a rich harvest  
of goodness and kindness;  
gentleness and hope,  
for the blessing of this world that you love.  
Amen.

## Reflection

### Sting In The Tale

Who sowed the nettles?  
Where do they come from?  
They seem to have come up overnight,  
ready to compete with other plants.  
I do not understand how that happened.  
The nettles—they just grow.

Who sowed the nettles?  
I cannot see where they came from.  
They seem to have invaded my space;  
ready to pierce my exposed skin.  
I know the pain of their sting.  
The nettles—they just grow.

Who sowed the nettles?  
I do not want them in my garden.  
They seem to be everywhere;  
ready to choke my lovely flowers.  
I cannot pull them all out.  
The nettles—along with my flowers.

Who sowed the nettles?  
Why didn't I see the other side?  
They seem to have drawn my attention;  
ready to expose my own preconception  
that they are the dreaded weeds.  
The nettles—they just are.

Who sowed the nettles?  
I am changing my mind.  
They seem to be God's blessing in disguise:  
a nutritious plant for making soup;  
a traditional medicine for health & well-being;  
a practical sign of soil fertility for vegetable gardens;  
a survival magnet for beautiful butterflies;  
a convenient aphid trap for ladybirds.

A bad reputation that can be put to positive use  
in both your garden and kitchen.

So let us thank God for the stinging nettles!



# worship ideas

## Take Home Ideas

Summer is a time of long days that stretch from an early dawn to a late dusk. There must be a little time in the day for some weeding.

Perhaps your garden, if you have one, is in need of some careful tending!

Take some time to spend tidying in your garden. This might mean some weeding. July is a time of abundant growth of all that takes root in the soil of the ground.

Use this time well; think of it as productive time—not a chore.

Use it not only to make a difference to the garden's appearance but as 'time for meditation and reflection'.

Consider, as you weed, the parable of Jesus. What chokes your life? What sucks energy out of your life and what might instead provide energy? We are to be the good seed that God spreads out in the world. What hinders our growth as God's people and what might we change in our life in order to be more productive in the growth of God's Kingdom?

## Sending

The Sower, God,  
spreads the seed in the fertile soil of his creation.

We are God's seed.  
Let God's Spirit feed you this week and beyond.

Grow well:  
let the earth be full of God's glory.

Grow well:  
let all the earth know his love.

## Praise/Hymns

Come, you thankful people, come	CH4 233 / MP 106
Father hear the prayer we offer	CH4 255 / MP 132
Fill thou my life	MP 146
Find a little seed	ATAS 61
For everyone born	CH4 685
For the fruits of all creation	CH4 231
God bless the grass	sung by Malvina Reynolds see <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRxvaVhVN7A">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YRxvaVhVN7A</a>
God has spoken to his people	MP 182
God, whose farm is all creation	CH4 226
In our lives, plant seeds of hope	CH4 349
Push, little seed	ATAS 206
The reign of God	CH4 343
Tiny little seed	see <a href="#">page 116</a>
Touch the earth lightly	CH4 243





# age group ideas

## gathering

### Flowers/Weed Quiz

all age

*You will need: prepare a simple quiz with a variety of pictures of flowers and weeds.*

Let the children look at each of the pictures you show them and then to vote on whether they think the plant is a prized flower or a weed. If there is disagreement about which is which, that is okay, try not to be too prescriptive. The reality of life is that often these kinds of labels are unhelpful.

## crafts

### Cress Heads

age 3-5

*You will need: paper cups, felt-tip pens, stickers, compost, cress seeds, and plastic spoons.*

Give each child a paper cup with their name written on the bottom. Ask the children to draw a face on one side of the paper cup, using felt-tip pens and to decorate the other side of the paper cup with stickers. Ask the children to scoop some compost into the paper cup using spoons and to fill to about 2 cm from the rim. Ask the children to dampen the compost a little and to scatter cress seeds over the soil, pressing in gently. Ask the children to take the pot home and to add a little drop of water each day until cress 'hair' grows.

Talk about things that grow such as flowers, plants, trees, animals, and people. Talk about how God's love grows and the ways we can help that to happen.

### Decorate A Plant Pot

age 6-8

*You will need: small plant pots (terracotta pots give more options for decorating but are more expensive than plastic pots, if you have terracotta pots you can use acrylic paints to decorate), and stickers.*

Give each child a pot and ask them to decorate it with materials provided.

We are to be like the good seeds growing and showing God's love. Talk about ways we can do this.



### Seed Mosaic Pictures

age 9-12

*You will need: seeds in different sizes, shapes, and colours, PVA glue, glue spreaders, and a canvas (thick A4 card/bathroom tile/cheap photo frames).*

Put different seeds onto paper plates so that the children can see the different shapes, sizes, and colours. Give each child a canvas and ask them to make a picture using the seeds. This could be a nature-inspired picture of a flower, tree, or animal. Ask the children to do a rough design first and then to put the glue onto their working surface, a small section at a time, rather than trying to put glue onto seeds. Leave flat to dry.

We are to be like the good seeds growing and showing God's love. Talk about ways we can do this.

### Sunflower Height Chart

all age

*You will need: lining paper or frieze paper, rulers, pencils, and chunky crayons or poster paints and paint brushes.*

Divide the children into groups of three or four. Give each group a length of paper approximately 1.5 metres in length. Ask the children to draw with pencil the outline of a large sunflower with a long stem, leaves, and a big head. Ask the children to mark off, along one edge, 10 cm spaces and to label these from 10 cm to 150cm. Ask the children to colour the sunflower using crayons or paints. Once the paint is dry, ask the children to measure each other's heights and to put their names against the height they are today. You could keep these height charts and measure the children again in a few months.

Talk about things that grow such as flowers, plants, trees, animals, and people. Talk about God's love growing and ways we can help that to happen.

# age group ideas

## games

### Watch Me Grow

age 3-5

A similar game to Traffic Lights and Follow My Leader. When you call “Crops”—everyone should stand tall and straight; with “Weeds”—jump up and down (weeds spring up really quickly), and with “Workers”—everyone runs around the room.

Crops grow and stand tall until they are harvested, but when weeds appear they spring up rapidly and you have lots of them. The workers need to harvest and bring in both crops and weeds. Weeds in our lives could be when we do something wrong, for example, a friend telling us to be naughty, getting into fights, or telling lies about someone.

### Fire In The Field

age 6-12

*You will need: a seat for every child (facing outwards in a square shape).*

The children sit in their seat facing outwards and you give each side of the square a team name: crops, weeds, soil, and workers. You call out the names randomly one at a time and when the team name is called the children in that team jump up and run around the square and back to their seats. The last one back turns their chair to face into the square. Every now and then you shout “fire in the field” and everybody (all four teams) jumps up and runs around the square—last one back turns their chair in.

If the weeds in our lives are people, what would that mean? Are they people who try to lead us into trouble, or perhaps people who gossip about others? What would you say to people who were trying to get you to do something that you knew was wrong?

### Sowing Good Seeds

age 6-12

This game is a bit like Soup with the four corners in the room being named after crops: wheat, barley, maize, and rapeseed. ‘IT’ (representing a weed) stands in the middle of room and calls out each corner in whatever order they like. One by one as the corners are called out, the children run around the person in the middle until ‘IT’ shouts “Weeds!” At this point, the children run back to their original corner while ‘IT’ tries to catch them. If they are caught they join in the middle, and the weeds start to multiply.

As the weeds multiply, they choke the life of the crops. If the weeds in our lives multiply, then they can affect our lives also. Discuss the weeds in our lives.

### Knotweed

all age

*You will need: some large boxes piled high.*

The children form a circle around the boxes and hold one another’s wrists. The children start pulling each other towards the boxes which represent ‘Knotweed’. The object of the game is to get people to touch the boxes in any form from feet, to arms, to elbows. If they touch the weed, they are out of the game and it starts again.

Knotweed is a plant that thrives in the UK. Talk about its history (easily found online) and why it is a big problem in Britain today. If we fail to talk about Jesus and why it is important to be kind, caring, loving, and fair, it is easy to get swamped with other thoughts and ideas. Big businesses spend millions of pounds each year to persuade us, for instance, that happiness is found in the latest phone or gadget, when happiness is found in each other.

## activities

### Flowers Or Weeds?

age 6-12

*You will need: a small bouquet of flowers and weeds mixed together and copies of the activity sheet on [page 115](#), permission to take the children for a walk outside.*

Allow the children to look at the bouquet of flowers and weeds. What do they think of it? Which of the items in the bouquet do they like and which they do not? Talk about shape, colour, fragrance, and size. Ask the children if they can identify which ones are flowers and which ones are weeds. Take a walk outside into the church grounds or local members’ gardens to look for and identify flowers and weeds. Complete the worksheet.

Why do farmers and gardeners dislike weeds? Weeds can spoil the look of a designed garden or the harvest of a farmer’s fields. They can choke the life out of crops and plants that you want to grow. What are the weeds in our lives today that get in the way of us being who we could be?

### The Elements

all age

*You will need: two trays with soil, electric fan, watering can, and images of a field during a drought, a field covered in snow, various crops, and the floods at the end of 2019.*

Talk about the various crops which grow that give us food and that sometimes the weather can be the farmer’s enemy also. Place the fan in front of the tray and let it blow on a low speed. Talk about the displacement of the soil and then put the fan on faster and faster. On the other tray, pour a small amount of water onto the soil and talk about the need for water. Keep adding more and more until the soil is flooded. Talk about and show the images of the fields in drought and snow.

Weeds are not the only problem for farmers. They face many enemies when trying to grow crops. Talk about what happens when the seeds blow away or the soil erodes. Talk about waterlogging—the length of time it takes to clear and how farmers can miss the planting season if the soil is waterlogged. What does this picture of how things grow translate to our own lives? What are the things that take up a lot of our energy and time but ultimately do not help us to be better people?

# discussion starters for teens

## stifling weeds

### Preparation

Gather together as many sets of Christmas fairy lights as you can find and then unravel them, if they have been carefully put away. Then mix them all up and shove them all together in a bag. You deliberately want to create a mess, as there may not be enough time for the tangle gremlins to do their work!

### Opening Activity

#### Unravel It

Dump the contents of the bag with all the mixed up fairy lights on to a table. Then give everyone the challenge to work together to unravel the lights. But, only give them a couple of minutes and tell them they have to be extremely gentle and careful so that the fairy lights still work.

The intention here is that they cannot achieve the goal in the time set, so you can gauge the time you allocate on how much of a messy tangle you provide.

- What was most frustrating about this challenge?
- What could you have done differently?
- How did you work together as a team to try to complete the challenge?
- How tempted were you to give up before the time allowed?

### The Word

Read Matthew 13:24-30 together.

- What do you make of this parable?
- Why do you think Jesus would have told it?
- What do you think he was trying to encourage and/or warn people about?

Matthew's gospel tells us that the parable was said to a crowd that had gathered to hear Jesus speak, so there would have been all kinds of people there to hear him, no doubt amongst them would have been religious leaders interested to hear what he was saying and keen to report back to those in charge.

Now read Matthew 13:36-43 together. In particular to think about what Jesus is saying in the context of a country that was ruled by Rome, that was dominated by violence, and into which Jesus was trying to advocate for a different kind of Kingdom, God's Kingdom.

- The language is very dogmatic, which can be a bit off-putting for us, but what do you take away from Jesus' explanation of the parable?
- How do you think he might explain the parable differently today?



### Activity/Discussion

Do some thinking together about what you might classify as the 'weeds' today, those things that stop us from doing the good things we know would build up God's kingdom. These might be things that are about us as individuals or about our communities and society. Internet trolls are particularly pernicious weeds in our modern times, as are those who disseminate fake news and information to deliberately mislead others.

- How easy would it be to try to get rid of those weeds?
- If we cannot get rid of them, then how do we live with them and continue to thrive?

As farming developed and the soil got used over and over again for certain crops, it was realised that the yield was going down. To replenish the soil with nutrients, farmers started to either leave the land for a fallow year in which it was allowed to rest and 'weeds' grew on the soil but actually provided a benefit to the soil, re-balancing it. Or they rotated the crops around so that the same field had a different kind of crop each year. Today the soil is replenished with artificial fertilisers, and chemicals are used to kill off weeds. This has seen great gains, but also comes at a cost to the environment.

- How would you value these different ways of trying to gain a greater harvest?
- And what does that mean for our perception of those things or people that we might think of as 'weeds' that get in the way of us doing what we think is best?

### Living It Out

Reading a passage like today's one with its hyperbolic language can be challenging and lead us to some binary black/white points of view. In humility this week, think about how you might sometimes act as that stifling weed in someone else's life. End by illuminating the fairy lights.





pentecost 8  
sunday 26 july 2020

# seeds giving more

## bible notes

### The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like...

Genesis 29:15-28

Psalms 128

Romans 8:26-39

**Matthew 13:31-33,44-52**

As we work our way through Matthew's gospel, we come to the third main chunk of teaching from Jesus. This section is comprised primarily of lots of parables: a buffet of all-you-can eat rural imagery from which to feast our souls. These images are so familiar to those of us who have grown up in the church that we may not grasp just how much they are located within a rural agricultural peasant culture to whom they would speak of the daily routine and of the people they would meet in market places and trading towns as they went to sell their wares.

While these parables still speak directly to many people around the world in developing nations, they are far removed from those of us in the developed nations. Which raises for us the inevitable question: what are the parables that we would use today to describe the Kingdom of Heaven? In a culture of instant communication and world-wide social media might we say: "the Kingdom of Heaven is like a tweet that spreads around the world and is liked by some, retweeted by others, and piled on by online trolls and bots intent on harassing and abusing the tweeter." Or "the Kingdom of Heaven is like a cat video, shared by a widow online on Facebook, and bringing laughter and joy to strangers on the other side of the globe." Or "the Kingdom of Heaven is like an e-book, perfect and new for every reader."

This week would be a great opportunity to challenge your congregation to come up with their own parables and images.

The point of a parable, of course, is not to provide easy answers. The purpose is to engage our imaginations in exploring how a metaphor might expand our understanding and raise further questions and discussion about the nature of the subject of the parable. These parables, which on the surface seem to be so straightforward, are not exceptions. They are invitations to ponder and think about what Jesus

is describing. No parable or metaphor can fully encapsulate its subject. However, they can each reveal something of a facet of the whole jewel. It can be overwhelming to be faced with a barrage of different parables as in this section of Matthew's gospel, but if we picture each of them as describing different facets of the jewel, it might help us to keep some perspective of the whole.

As has been pointed out in previous weeks, throughout Matthew's account of Jesus' life is an undercurrent of division and the conflict that Jesus' life, ministry, and teaching stirs within the community as it comes into direct contact with the powerful of his time and the overall rule of Rome in the region. We have a direct contrast between the kingdom of Rome and the Kingdom of Heaven, and the juxtaposition of the Roman Emperor with God's rule of his empire of the heavens. These parables help to explore with their listeners why so many people do not "get it", why they refuse to enter into God's reign as revealed by Jesus, and the place of human sinfulness and the role of the Deceiver in leading people away from the Kingdom of God.

Up to this point in Jesus' ministry much of the revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven has been localised and focused on the transformation of individual lives. Welcome as that was for those concerned and those who understood the importance of what was happening, these actions could be relatively easily dismissed by the Pharisees and others intent on undermining this challenge to their own position. The parables collected here move beyond that relatively parochial beginning and start to explore the massive implications of what Jesus has been revealing and the cosmic scale of what he was doing. They open our imaginations to see the Kingdom of Heaven beyond ourselves: "the Kingdom of Heaven is like cloud storage that has no limit..."



# the story

## Have You Understood All This?

### *A script for three voices.*

- Voice A: Jesus is here.
- Voice B: He's telling stories.
- Voice A: Oh good. I love stories.
- Voice B: He's telling stories about the kingdom.
- Voice A: About how it could be one day?
- Voice B: About how it could be every day.
- Voice C: The kingdom is like a mustard seed, really tiny, but it grows into an enormous bush that the birds nest in.
- Voice A: So the kingdom can start tiny and grow into something huge.
- Voice B: Sounds good. Makes sense.
- Voice C: The kingdom is like yeast. A woman takes it and mixes it with flour to make dough, and the dough rises.
- Voice A: A bit out of my comfort zone this one. I must check it out with my sister.
- Voice B: Perhaps Jesus has been watching his mother baking?
- Voice C: The kingdom is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and then hid again. Then the man went and sold everything he had and bought the field. He was really happy.
- Voice A: Lucky man. It must have been some treasure!
- Voice B: Treasure that he was determined to own.
- Voice A: Canny investor, that man.
- Voice B: He knew what was really worth having.
- Voice C: The kingdom is like a merchant searching for fine pearls, when he finds a good one, he sells everything he owns and buys it.
- Voice A: Make a lot of money, traders.
- Voice B: Especially the ones who know what they're doing.
- Voice A: I would be afraid to risk it.
- Voice B: Me too, but sometimes you have to take a chance and commit yourself to something.
- Voice A: Do you think that's what Jesus meant?
- Voice B: Aye, maybe.
- Voice C: The kingdom is like a net that was thrown into the sea. When the net was full of all kinds of fish, the fishermen pulled it ashore and sorted the fish. The good fish were put into baskets and the bad fish thrown away.
- Voice A: It's amazing how many different kinds of fish there are in Lake Galilee.
- Voice B: But you soon learn which ones sell in the market.
- Voice A: Hang on—Jesus is saying something else.
- Voice B: Maybe there's a bit more to the story?
- Voice A: He is talking about the end of the age.
- Voice B: I have heard our rabbi talk about that.
- Voice A: He says angels will come and sort out the good people and the bad people
- Voice B: Angels?
- Voice A: And the angels will throw the bad people into a fiery furnace.
- Voice B: Scary!
- Voice A: And Jesus is saying there will be lots of wailing and gnashing of teeth!
- Voice B: Not a pretty picture. Are you sure that's what Jesus said? He doesn't usually talk like that.
- Voice A: I think I heard it right.
- Voice B: Certainly gives us something to think about!
- Voice C: Listen my disciples. Have you understood all this?
- A and B: *(looking at each other before speaking)* Yes.
- Voice C: Every scribe who has been trained for the Kingdom of Heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.
- Voice A: He's back on treasure again, something about old and new.
- Voice B: I think he's lost me this time.
- Voice A: Me too.
- Voice B: Maybe we'll get a chance later to ask him what he means.



# the story

## Retelling For Young People

### Stories About Everyday Things

- How do you describe something to someone if they do not know what you are talking about?

Imagine trying to describe a dandelion. You could say. It is a plant. It has yellow flowers. It is like a daffodil. Some people call it a weed.

Have a go at describing something you know about. Perhaps a film, a book, a bird or a machine.

- Can your friends guess what you are describing?

Jesus often tried to tell his friends what life would be like if people loved God and loved their neighbours.

He said that it would be like a tiny seed that would grow into a huge bush. Then he said it would be like the yeast that makes dough rise.

Jesus talked about buried treasure hidden in a field, and a special pearl worth lots of money.

Jesus often talked about the sea and fishing and about all the different kinds of fish that could be caught in a fishing net.

Jesus told stories about the things he saw every day.

- What can you find out about yeast and bread?
- Can you find a recipe and do some baking?
- Where do pearls come from? Have you ever seen one?
- Have you ever found something hidden underground?

Look up 'David Booth's gold treasure' and 'The Lewis Chessmen' on Google.

- What kinds of fish can be caught near to where you live?
- If everyone loved God and loved their neighbours what do you think the world would be like?
- Can you write a poem or draw a picture to describe it?

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Jesus often teaches his lessons through the use of parables; stories with little hidden and not so hidden meanings. As many of us continue to worship in our homes due to the current crisis, what is hidden in this new experience for you?

Is there something you can do right now before worshipping that will allow you to connect? A quick phone call to a fellow church member? A wave and thumbs up to someone passing your window? A little message sent by text to say "God bless"? Look for the hidden treasure amidst these strange times. And when you find it, give thanks.

## Call to Worship

Leader: A tiny seed planted can grow to a mighty tree.

**All: In small numbers we worship today,  
but as part of a mighty Church worldwide.**

Leader: A tiny bit of yeast can make the loaf rise.

**All: Tempted to feel small and alone,  
we rise to worship, part of a greater whole.**

Leader: Wondering at the worth  
of our presence and praise at home,

**All: we worship today offering what combined  
treasures we have.**

## Prayer of Dedication

Lord,  
in the knowledge that we are precious to you,  
may our thankful offering bring comfort,  
healing, and reassurance,  
to your people throughout the world.

May the bounty you give us  
be shared in the love with which it is given,  
and may we continue to serve you,  
though the giving of ourselves  
as you have given yourself for us.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of the universe,  
we thank you that you meet us here,  
in this corner of the world.

We thank you that we matter to you,  
that we have a place in your divine economy.  
And so we dare to offer you our praises.

You grace our gatherings,  
large or small,  
with the beauty of your presence,  
embracing our clumsy attempts  
to honour you, Lord of all.  
We thank you that you look on us  
with love and lift our humanity,  
and that you look on the ways  
we fail you and one another  
in grace and forgiveness.

God, as those who know ourselves forgiven,  
loved and called to serve,  
may we affirm one another,  
building each other up  
to seek to serve you,  
great God of all.

And so,  
may our worship here  
enable us to fix our eyes on you,  
equipping us for your mission  
in our neighbourhood  
and throughout the world,  
in Jesus' name.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

Help us to see you all around, O God:  
in our families and friends,  
in WhatsApp and Instagram,  
in FaceTime and TikTok,  
in all the ways we have of connecting,  
even when we are apart.

May we use all the opportunities  
we have to spread love and not fear,  
to build up and not tear down,  
to give thanks and celebrate achievement,  
and to know you, God of the old and the young,  
are bringing us together  
to love one another  
through this time and forever.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

God,  
in every time and season,  
you are teaching us more  
about ourselves and about you.

May we always be open  
to discovering new ways of seeing,  
and new ways of serving you, God of all the ages.

May we know that nothing is hidden from you,  
and that nothing is foreign.  
You know and embrace the ordinary times  
and the extraordinary times.  
And what is more,  
you lead us through whatever we face.

God,  
in the midst of chaos and fear,  
may we see you quietly at work  
and calling us to follow.  
May we lighten one another's burden  
however we can:  
by connecting,  
by listening,  
by being the neighbours you invite us to be.  
May we bear one another's burdens  
and share one another's grief.  
And, in time, may we rejoice together in your love.

Lord, we may not know the way ahead,  
but we do know that you are with us  
and will never leave us.  
May that assurance help us  
to face all that we must face,  
and strengthen us to continue to step out in faith,  
holding the Christ light for one another,  
knowing that you are with us  
and you go before us always.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Reflection

Where will faith be found?  
Not in the rights-denying,  
scarcity-mongering policies  
of our governments...

Where will faith be found?  
Not in the strategy-driven,  
rule-keeping efforts  
of our institutions...

Where will faith be found?  
Not in the desperate,  
programme-centric flailing  
of our churches...

Where will faith be found?  
In the acts of everyday people,  
who see and respond to an opportunity,  
to make a difference in their neighbourhood;  
those who create beauty,  
by eschewing what is deemed right and proper,  
choosing, instead:  
to take risks,  
to make music,  
to dance,  
to respond to the rhythm that is all around...

Attuned to the rhythm of God,  
our senses are awakened:  
to the gifts and the needs  
of our neighbour.  
And there, will faith be found.

## Take Home Ideas

Try to donate some items to a charity shop this next week.

Often, we store stuff at home and yet in reality, it has little value to us anymore. We might be reluctant to discard it, or sometimes we forget such items lurk at the bottom of a drawer or in the back of a cupboard.

This week think of the things we have at home that may have value to others. Circumstances for others might mean that what we think of as having little value is very precious to them. Even if not the item itself—the money the charity might raise through selling our discarded items creates a treasure chest of financial resources which the charity can use to support people in their time of need.

## Sending

Lord,  
teach us we are never so small,  
so insignificant,  
as to be of low value to you.

Help us to know how precious we are.

As we go,  
cast us into the world;  
show us where to go  
that we might meet the world's need,  
from the bounty of gifts and talents,  
stored in the treasure chest  
of the person you have made us to be.

## Praise/Hymns

Be thou my vision	CH4 465/MP 51
Come host of Heaven	Known/Unknowns 12
Daises are our silver	online at <a href="http://www.ehymnbook.org/CMMS/hymnSong.php?id=pd14756">http://www.ehymnbook.org/CMMS/hymnSong.php?id=pd14756</a>
Faith small as a mustard seed	ATAS 54
Find a little seed	ATAS 61
Jesus calls us here to meet him	CH4 510
Jesus Christ is waiting	CH4 360
Jesus Christ, our living Lord	CH4 524
Jesus said, 'If you have faith'	CH4 349
Lord when your kingdom comes	<i>Known/Unknowns</i> , WGP 48
Oh the Life of the world	CH4 141
Push, little seed	ATAS 206
Seek ye first	CH4 641 / MP 590
The great love of God	CH4 358
The reign of God	CH4 343





# age group ideas

## gathering

### Listening To Stories

all age

*You will need: a well-known children's story book.*

Find a favourite children's story book and read the story to the children, showing them the illustrations. Ask the children which bit they liked best. Use that as a way of introducing the idea that we each pick up different things from a story and how the pictures help us. Talk about how Jesus told stories using different images to help people understand more about what he was saying.

## crafts

*Today we are providing craft ideas for some of the images used in the parables. Please adapt these ideas for the age groups and children in your group.*

*For mustard seed, refer back to 'seed' activities from last week and ask the children if they are growing any seeds/plants.*



### Yeast

all age

*You will need: different kinds of flat breads and crackers, different kinds of rolls, sandwich fillings (such as jam, cheese spread, or chocolate spread), plates, knives, aprons, wet wipes or basins with warm water, soap and towels, and a packet of yeast.*

Ask the children to wash their hands and put on an apron. Ask the children to make sandwiches for themselves. Each child should have a cracker, flat bread, and roll. Pour out yeast into a bowl.

As the children are enjoying their snacks, talk with them about the differences in texture and taste in the different kinds of bread and which ones they like best. Show the children the yeast and talk about how a tiny amount of yeast can make a difference and make the bread rise. Talk about the parable and the way love makes a difference, bringing in God's kingdom.

### Treasure

all age

*You will need: boxes with lids (egg carton would work), coloured paper, scissors, pencils, PVA glue, glue spreaders, sticky gems, and stickers.*

Give each child a box and ask them to decorate the lid. Ask the children to draw around the lid onto coloured paper, to cut out the shape, and to stick the paper onto the lid. Ask the children to decorate the lid with stickers and sticky gems.

Talk with the children about what sort of things they would put into a treasure box. Talk about the parable and how happy the man was to find the treasure in the field. Talk about being happy when we find the treasure of God's love and God's way.

### Pearl

all age

*You will need: paper plates, PVA glue, glue spreaders, shiny paper or flat backed buttons, scissors, and chunky crayons or marker pens.*

Give each child a paper plate and ask them to fold it in half. Ask the children to cut a triangle from about 2 cm in along the folded edge at both ends. When the plate is opened up it should look like an opened shell. On the inside of the shell and in the top half, ask the children to colour bright stripes using either crayons or marker pens, with the stripes radiating out like sun rays. On the inside of the shell in the bottom half, ask the children to glue in a small disc of shiny paper about the size of a two pence piece or to stick in a shiny button.

Talk about precious gems and stones: do the children know the names of any of these? Talk about the parable and how happy the man was to find the fine pearl. Talk about being happy when we find the beauty of God's love and God's way.



# age group ideas

## games

### What's The Value?

age 6-12

*You will need: a number of items on a table that have different values in money (under £10, such as a chocolate bar, pencil, mug, and memory stick with enough items so that every child has an item).*

Let the children go up to the table one at a time and pick an item. The idea is to pick the item that is worth the most. However, in one of the items—for example, a broken vase or a plain envelope—place a £10 note. Something that does not look very good but has the highest value because of what is inside it.

Many people and items have hidden values and we do not know what they are until they are revealed to us. Jesus tells us the hidden value of the Kingdom of heaven in this passage through his stories.

### Heaven Is A Wonderful Place

age 6-12

*You will need: A5 sheets of paper with each of the letters on them for the phrase 'heaven is a wonderful place' plus a few extra letters that are not contained in this phrase.*

Make this into a relay race where the children run to the end of the room and collect a letter. You could make this an obstacle course to make it more difficult; or the first person runs, second person jumps, third person hops and so on. Once the children have all the letters, ask them to form the phrase with the letters they have—best artistic display wins!

What does heaven look like to the children? You have spare letters left over but Jesus wants to include everyone, so he gives us lots of images that will appeal to all people. Try teaching the song "Heaven Is A Wonderful Place" from Salty music and sing it in rounds.

### Find The Treasure

all age

*You will need: a black bin bag for each team filled with lots of dry rubbish and shredded paper, add a few treasures for them to find (such as coins, a bible, and fake jewellery).*

A relay game for the children to run to the bag, find a treasure within it, and bring it back to the team. Once all the teams are finished, ask them to place all their treasures in front of them. Let them study what is there and then play 'Kim's Game' by taking away one item and asking the children to identify what is missing.

We have been given the treasure of hearing what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Where is the best place they have ever been? The quietest place they have been? The most important place they have been? Sadly, some people never hear about they will be missing because they do not hear the stories that Jesus told.

## activities

### Pick 'N' Mix Storytelling A & B

all age

*You will need: items on table A (such as pencil, coin, teddy bear, flower and so on) and items on table B (which come from the story, for example: angel, flour, fish, treasure (jewellery), seeds).*

Taking something from table A, the children are to make up a short story about their item. If they find this difficult, let them tell you about the item they have picked up: for example, what it looks like, if they have one at home, and where they keep it. For the older children it will easier to make up a short story. Do the same for table B but this time, can they recall any stories in the bible where these items are mentioned?

Today's reading is a pick 'n' mix of stories about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. Ask the children to discuss what their view of heaven is like.

### Treasure Chest

all age

*You will need: a large box decorated to look like a treasure chest and filled with different items that could be treasure and others that are only treasure to you or someone in need (also filled with shredded paper so the children need to rummage around in it to find an item).*

Let the box be the centre piece of your room as the children walk in today. Before opening the box, ask the children what they know about treasure chests. Are there any films or stories that they know of which have treasure chests in them? Open the chest and let the children rummage around and find some treasure. As each item is taken out, discuss why it is classed as treasure. Some of your own treasure could be things like a family photo.

In the bible passage, treasure to one person is junk to another and some treasure has little or no value at all to one person but is invaluable to others. Talk about faith in God and the image of the Kingdom of Heaven being treasures and invaluable to a person of faith. Some people put no value on this but as Christians, it a treasure above all treasure.

### Hidden Treasure

all age

*You will need: basins filled with soil (in the soil place glass gems, stones, and cooked pasta for the children to find, and then add lots of water to the soil to make it messy, messy, messy!).*

One by the one, the children must search through the soil and find a gem which will be their treasure. The cooked pasta will feel like worms.

Talk about people who go out with metal detectors looking for buried treasure (for the older children have some facts about big finds in recent years). Finding a hidden treasure feels good and believing in Jesus and listening as we are told what the Kingdom of Heaven is like is a hidden treasure for us.

# discussion starters for teens

## parable pearls

### Preparation

Copies of the activity sheet wordsearch found on [page 120](#).  
A simple prize for the winner (unless your budget stretches to a pearl!).

A flip chart and marker pens would be useful for the Activity/Discussion.

### Opening Activity

#### Pearl Diving

Give everyone a copy of the wordsearch sheet with an additional blank sheet of paper covering up the actual wordsearch.

When you give the indication then everyone should uncover the wordsearch and try searching for the pearl. There is only one pearl, one word to find. The first person to find it is declared the winner and given their prize.

- Have you ever been on a treasure hunt?
- What was it like?
- What did you hunt for?
- Who was with you?

### The Word

Read Matthew 13:31-33,44-52 together.

- Which of the parables meant most to you?
- What do the parables tell you about the Kingdom of Heaven?

### Activity/Discussion

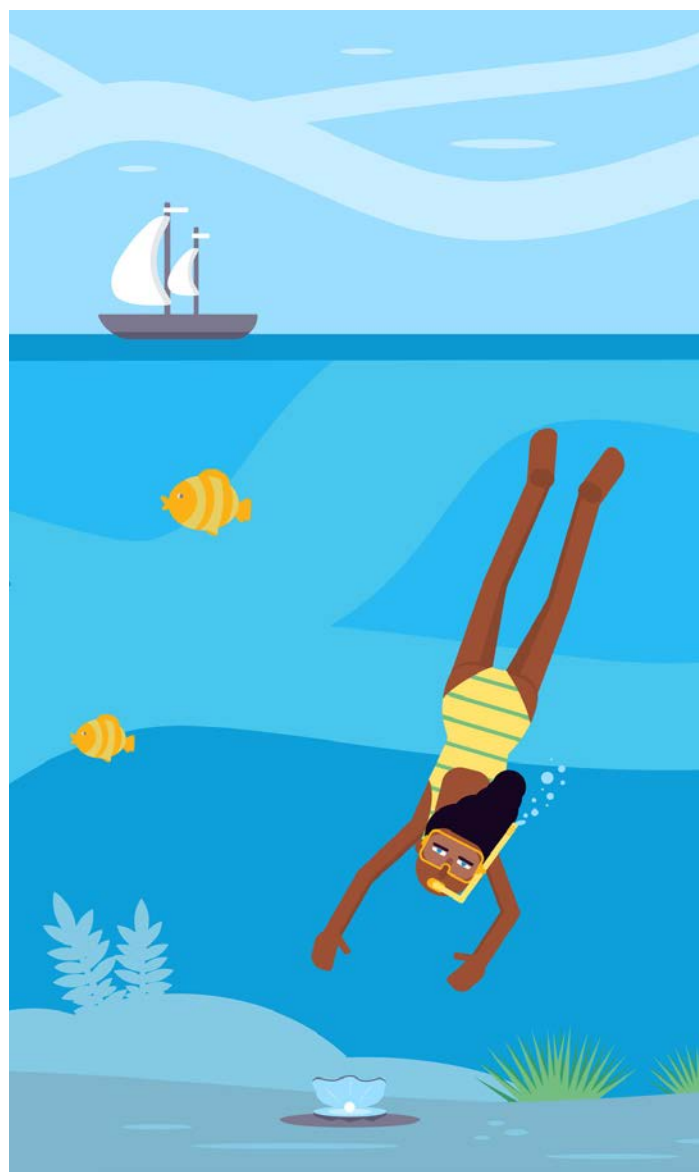
#### The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like...

These parables, like many that are attributed to Jesus, are ways by which Jesus uncovers something of what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

He used the everyday things that people would have known something about to give a word picture to stir people's imaginations. However the images Jesus used are perhaps not the most up-to-date for us today.

Challenge the young people to firstly come up with some attributes that they believe describe God's kingdom (for instance, peaceful, loving, sharing, equal justice, and so on). Write their ideas up on the flip chart.

Then, once you have some ideas for these attributes, on a new sheet of paper write at the top "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." and encourage the young people to come up with their own ideas of word pictures or simple parables to describe an aspect of God's Kingdom. There are some examples in the Bible Notes on [page 68](#).



- How did you find this task?
- How easy or difficult was it to come up with new parables?
- What appreciation does this give you for all the many parables that Jesus used?

### Living It Out

Try to find the hidden treasure in an encounter you have this week in person or online, and appreciate the part that person plays in your life. Take the chance to acknowledge that other person and how thankful you are for knowing them.





pentecost 9  
sunday 2 august 2020

# seed sharing with all

## bible notes

Genesis 32:22-31

Psalms 17:1-7, 15

Romans 9:1-5

**Matthew 14:13-21**

### The Alternative Feast

In last week's smorgasbord of parables revealing facets of the Kingdom of Heaven, we were invited to accept that Jesus knew of what he was talking and thus to enter into the journey with him that leads to the building of that Kingdom in the here and now. Between those parables and today's famous story of the feeding of the multitude—a fan favourite for most of us—we have the account of Herod's murder of John the Baptist.

Out of fear that John may have led an insurrection against the powerful, the Empire strikes back. In grief at the news, though it could hardly have come as a surprise to him, Jesus seeks time away from the crowd and ventures by boat away to a deserted place.

The tension and division between the itinerant prophetic and healing ministries of John and Jesus as it is contrasted with the power and authority of Herod and his overlords from Rome is ratcheted up another step in this chapter. Matthew juxtaposes the sumptuous birthday feast of Herod culminating in John's head being presented to Herodias's daughter on a platter with the massed hungry crowds following Jesus into the wilderness and needing sustenance.

That sustenance is provided by Jesus. After a series of parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, here we have an enacted parable. The Kingdom priority towards the sick, the poor, and the hungry is made real as Jesus first heals those amongst the crowd who are unwell and then overrules the request of the disciples, as dusk falls, to send the crowd away, instead commanding his disciples to give them something to eat.

The commissioning of the disciples to enter into co-ministry with Jesus is given a dramatic push in this story. They cannot feed the multitude without Jesus' action amongst them, but Jesus also draws them into that action. They

provide the initial food of five loaves and two fish, and then they go out to share the food with the crowd after Jesus has blessed it.

The royal feast in the Herodian palace ends, one imagines, in a debauched frenzy as a bloody platter is displayed for all to see, or, one might hope, in an uneasy silence as the platter makes its way through the tables, the music and dancing coming to a halt as the gravity of what had happened to John is realized. However, out in the wilderness, the most humble of basic foods is shared amongst the crowd in an atmosphere of joyous thankfulness: the hungry are fed, the sick are cured, and the Kingdom of Heaven becomes real for these people in that time and place. The alternative to blood lust, greed, and power is revealed in the wilderness as compassion, generosity and a sharing in the good harvest provided by the land and sea. Injustice has its home in Herod's lush palace, while justice is found in the parched wilderness, ignored by the powerful elites in their lavish homes.

When we celebrate the Sacrament of Communion in most churches it is a very simple, sparse meal indeed. Yet it is a meal that overflows with meaning, invitation, and abundant grace. That meal, as with the simple meal offered in the wilderness, reminds us that our definition of "plenty" is governed much by our society's expectations. How many meals have we had at restaurants where the merit of the meal is measured in quantity rather than quality; and our plates are gathered up at the end still piled with food to discard? How do we talk about generosity and abundance in our world when our society values excess and the huge wastage that results from it? How do we re-frame our understanding of the justice of abundant food for all, for the whole multitude and not just the select few, in today's world where so many struggle to know what it is to have one's hunger satisfied?



# the story

## The Funeral Purvey

Ada: Well, that was some funeral purvey your family put on for your Auntie Betty, Andy. Sandwiches, sausage rolls, scones with jam and cream, and fancy cakes. I don't think I will be able to eat another thing all day. I think there was enough food to feed the church for a week.

Andy: Aye well, Auntie Betty always wanted a good send off. She certainly loved a party and you can tell by the size of her that she loved her food!

Ada: Andy, you should not speak ill of the dead like that.

Andy: Oh, sorry Ada, hen. I wasn't meaning to insult her memory, she and I often bantered about her size, and she just laughed it off!

Ada: How many folks did the family cater for?

Andy: Around 80, but over a hundred turned up. But nae worries, Ada, the hotel was great and sorted it nae problem.

Ada: Wow, a hundred folk.

Andy: Aye, but that's nothing. John the Baptist had over 5000 turn up for his funeral purvey.

Ada: Where did you read that, Andy?

Andy: It's in the bible, Ada. Have you no been paying attention?

Ada: Of course I have, Andy, you know how I always listen to the Minister! But I don't remember him ever telling us that John the Baptist had a funeral purvey.

Andy: Oh, but he did, Ada. Have you not heard the story of the feeding of the five thousand?

Ada: Aye, Andy. It's a favourite story of mine.

Andy: Well, the way Matthew tells it, Jesus has just heard that John the Baptist had been killed—beheaded actually! Jesus goes away to a quiet place to pray about it. Many of John's followers and Jesus' followers go and look for Jesus, and after sharing their grief and listening to Jesus they end up hungry. The disciples think Jesus should send everyone home. However, Jesus tells them they should show compassion and feed everybody!

Ada: That would be an awful lot of sausage rolls, Andy!

Andy: Well, Ada, hen (trying to be superior). They didn't have sausage rolls, nor scones wi strawberry jam and cream, or even bits of millionaire shortbread!

Ada: Er... I know, Andy!

Andy: But they did manage to rumble up five loaves and two fish!

Ada: Are you telling me that out of five thousand folk, they only had five loaves and two fish?

Andy: As I telt you Ada, they had been at a funeral, and you don't tend to carry food to a funeral.

Ada: Wow, but five loaves and two fish!

Andy: I know, it's amazing. Jesus just blessed the food and they shared it and kept on sharing it, until they were full to the gunnels. Then they collect twelve baskets of leftovers.

Ada: Wow, that's some funeral purvey. They would have been able to feed the whole city with that.

Andy: Ada, that's the thing with Jesus! He keeps on giving, over and over again, and he encourages us to do likewise.

Ada: Did John's gospel not say that it was a wee boy who offered up his five loaves and two fish? I like that fact, as it seems the adults had no idea what to do, but this wee boy believed it was something, and Jesus certainly made it into something?

Andy: Aye, the biggest funeral purvey in the world.

Ada: Or the miracle of what happens when we share with one another.

Andy: Aye, God gave folk at a wedding enough to drink, and here he gives folk enough to eat at a funeral. God certainly understands what we need and when we need it.

Ada: Oh yes, Andy... in so many ways... in so many ways.



Feasting and Feeding (Matthew 14:1-21) by Leila Kleineidam

# the story

## Retelling For Young People

### Mitchell And The Hungry Mice

"Pssst, Meenister!" Mitchell the mouse whispered to me as I sat in the vestry having my lunch.

"Oh, hi Mitchell, how are you today?" I replied.

"Exhausted."

"Why are you exhausted, Mitchell?" I asked. "Eating too many hymnburgers again, or cleaning up after the children's summer service?"

"No, Meenister, I was at my Great Uncle Herbert's funeral. It took us days to get there and days to get back, and while I was there the most amazing thing happened."

I couldn't resist asking: "An amazing thing happened at a funeral, Mitchell? Tell me more."

So Mitchell explained: "Aye, well, not at the funeral exactly. That was very dignified for such an important mouse as my Uncle Herbert. It was afterwards that it happened."

"What do you mean afterwards?"

"Well, you can imagine that lots of mice had travelled to pay their respects to Uncle Herbert, for he was our chief mouseketeer, and everyone loved him and respected him."

"What is a Mouseketeer?"

"Well, he is like your Major General in the Army." Mitchell answered.

"Okay, so what happened after the service?"

Mitchell continued: "Well, we were all sitting talking, telling our favourite stories about Uncle Herbert. Like the time he had chased a whole group of cats out of his barnyard. Or the time he single-handedly took on a wild ginger tomcat and outwitted and outran him, and got the fat tomcat stuck in between two fence posts. Oh, how we laughed and cried at the stories of his bravery and honour, and his funny little sayings."

"So, what was this thing that happened, Mitchell?" I pursued, "You keep avoiding telling me."

"Oh, I am sorry, Meenister. Well, you see, everyone was starting to get hungry. We had not planned to be there so long and there was no food to eat, or at least enough for everyone. So I had a little bit of cheese in my bag and shared it, and someone else had some sweets, and another a broken biscuit, and so on, until everyone got something and no one went home hungry."

"Funny you should say that, Mitchell. There is a bible story just like yours that is recorded in all four gospels. In one story, a wee boy shared his loaves and two fish, and more than five thousand people got fed after Jesus blessed it and shared the little food with everyone."

"Did you say five thousand people got fed?"



"Yes, I did, Mitchell, more than that when you count all the men, women and children."

"Well, praise God for that, Meenister. Did they count the mice too?"

"Ha ha, not that we know, Mitchell, but I am sure the field mice had quite a feast of their own after everyone left. And well done you for sharing what you had as well."

"Thanks, Meenister, it felt good to share."

I nodded quietly, and turned to Mitchell: "You want a bit of my sandwich?"

Mitchell twitched his nose and said, "I thought you'd never ask!"



# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Today's story is a stark contrast to what we can do in worship in these strange, troubling days. We currently cannot meet friends and fellow church members in buildings that we have been so used to going into. Take time then to gather your congregation around you this morning in your home. Find a pen and piece of paper and one by one write down the names of people at Church you know.

If you do not know names, write down something that reminds you of that person: the young woman with the lovely smile; our organist who is always so committed; the wee boy in Sunday school who always has an answer. You may even wish to cut these names out and place them on different chairs in the room you are worshipping in. If you do not have enough chairs for all the names, place your pieces of paper on the floor.

We are not alone. We are just apart.

## Call to Worship

Leader: Remembering when we could gather  
as a congregation,

**All: we worship now in our own homes.**

Leader: Remembering how Jesus drew the crowds,

**All: we worship knowing he draws us still in solidarity.**

Leader: Remembering how Christ fed the hungry,

**All: we worship now for food for the soul,  
each solitary one of us a part  
of that glorious noisy throng.**

## Prayer of Dedication

Lord God,  
help us to use our power wisely  
for the good of all creation.  
May we share all that you have given us  
for love of the world,  
and to honour your name.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

God of miracle and God of everyday,  
may we see you no:  
healing, feeding, teaching, serving,  
through ordinary people,  
whom you call to be your body in the world today.  
We thank you that you reveal your love  
in those around us,  
and that you even enable us  
to step up to be Christ for one another.

Lord, forgive us  
for the times we cannot be bothered,  
the times we look to our own comfort first,  
and forget that your command is to love one another.  
Forgive us and help us to do better.

God,  
in Jesus you gave us a perfect example.  
May we keep on learning from him,  
and may we become imitators of him,  
until we too are sought out by others,  
as people of peace and of love in the name of God,  
who is love.  
Amen.

## All-Age Prayer

Lord God,  
wherever you went,  
the crowds followed,  
because they knew that you would feed them  
in body, mind, and spirit.

May we gather friends too  
because we are known to be kind and generous.

You found it difficult to have time on your own,  
may we always have space  
to recharge when we are tired.

Help us, Lord Jesus, just like you did,  
to always see possibility and potential,  
and to enhance the gifts of others,  
sharing what we have  
and being glad of all that others bring.  
So may we love and serve you in all things.  
Amen.

# worship ideas

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

God,  
when we are frightened,  
give us courage;  
when we are disturbed,  
bring us calm;  
when we sit in darkness,  
show us the beginnings of dawn;  
when we want to retreat and be quiet,  
nudge us back to bring life to others;  
when we are tempted to hoard what we have,  
open our hands to share.

God,  
again and again remind us that we have power:  
power to heal the earth and its people.  
May we use that power  
in love and service as Christ showed us.

Lord,  
surprise us with glimpses of you  
at work around us,  
making all things new.  
May we yearn to be a part of that,  
working alongside you,  
to heal creation with you,  
God of the universe.  
Amen.

## Reflection

When Jesus heard this...  
the news that his cousin had been killed:  
he wanted time to be alone,  
he wanted space to mourn,  
but everyone wanted a piece of him.

Often we do not know the back story.  
We only know our needs,  
and our wants.

May we have compassion:  
for all the back stories,  
that we might never hear,  
and may we tread cautiously  
in our encounters with others,  
allowing for the possibility  
that we tread on broken dreams,  
and shattered hope.

May we be gentle,  
may we be kind,  
making space for one another.

## Take Home Ideas

### Picnic Time!

A simple idea. You might plan a picnic this week. Take some time off your work or chores, prepare a picnic, and head off to the wilderness of the countryside or the shoreline and enjoy time with friends, with family, or in the solitude of your own company.

If you are having a busy week and cannot afford the time for a picnic, try instead to take your lunch, or even a coffee break, outside.

In this moment, think of the picnic Jesus shared with others in the story from our text.

Re-imagine what was on the crowd's mind after the terrible incident of John losing his life and the need for people to find comfort and assurance. Recognise the strength and sustenance they found in Jesus presence. Such a 'gift of Divine presence' is there for us when we need it!

### Sending

Lord, you are there for us.  
When life leaves us parched or hungry,  
anxious or weary,  
direct us to you—  
the source of Holy food.

Reveal yourself as the giver of all that we need.  
Physical need is met in what you make ready for us,  
and intend to make available for all.  
Spiritual need is met in the giving of yourself for us,  
and for all people.

With the knowledge of such love and generosity,  
let us go into the world restored and renewed.

## Praise/Hymns

A little more	see <a href="#">page 112</a>
Bread of life, hope of the world	CH4 663
Break thou the bread of life	MP 64
For everyone born, a place at the table	CH4 685
Give me your love, Lord	ATAS 72
Guide me, O thou great Jehovah	CH4 167 / MP 201
In Cana at a wedding feast	online at <a href="https://www.carolynshymns.com/in_cana_at_a_wedding_feast.html">https://www.carolynshymns.com/in_cana_at_a_wedding_feast.html</a>
Jesus cared about the people	ATAS 140
Let us talents and tongues employ	CH4 673
Love divine, all loves excelling	CH4 519
Sharing together he's found	see <a href="#">page 118</a>
The trumpets sound	MP 667
When to our world the Saviour came	MP 761
Where is bread?	online at <a href="https://www.carolynshymns.com/where_is_bread.html">https://www.carolynshymns.com/where_is_bread.html</a>



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Picnic

all age

*You will need: picnic rug, picnic basket with crisps, cakes, juice, and so on.*

Set up a picnic and as the children arrive invite them to come and share in the picnic with you. Share the food and share in some chat together too. Let this lead into the story.

## crafts

### Loaves And Fishes Basket

age 3-5

*You will need: two paper plates per child, brown crayons, a wicker basket or something similar with a raised basket pattern, stapler, staples, scissors, fizzy fish sweets, and square crisps.*

Prepare the plates for the children by folding gently in half and then cutting away from the centre circle half of the base of the plate, making sure to keep the rim intact. This makes one half of the basket. Now give the children two plates and get them to lay each one on top of the wicker basket and rub the plate all over with the edge of a brown crayon—this should create a basket pattern on their plate. Get the children to put the two plain sides of their plates together, making sure the spaces match and this should create their basket. Staple their basket along the bottom edge for them and this should allow them to hold their basket. Give them two fizzy fish and five square crisps to put inside to represent the loaves and fish.

Talk with the children about the story and the way a small amount of food was shared so that everyone could be fed. Talk about how we could share what we have with others and how sharing makes us feel and others feel.

### Loaves And Fish

age 6-8

*You will need: A3 paper, paint, paint trays, square crackers (five per child), felt pens, self-stick googly eyes, wet wipes (optional), PVA glue, and glue spreaders.*

Prepare the paint in the trays, ensuring the trays are big enough to fit a child's hand. Give the children the paper and ask them to lay it landscape orientation. Now get them to dip their right hand into the paint and then print it onto the paper with the fingers spread and their thumb downwards to create a fish shape. They should do this twice. Let them clean their hands and then give them five of the crackers to lay around their fish (or stick them on using the PVA glue). When their fish shapes have dried, they can then add a googly eye and a smiley face to them!

Talk with the children about the story and the way a small amount of food was shared so that everyone could be fed. Talk about other things we might share with people, how sharing makes us feel, how it makes others feel, and how sharing with others could make a difference to them.



### Fish And Bread

age 9-12

*You will need: different breads, tinned tuna, tinned salmon, fish paste, mayonnaise, butter, knives, bowls, plates, fish shaped cutters, and food prep gloves.*

Simply let the children make sandwiches and cut them into fish shapes (economically!). These sandwiches could be then served to others in the group or to the congregation after worship.

Talk with the children about the story and the way a small amount of food was shared so that everyone could be fed. Talk about how we could share what we have with others and how sharing makes us feel and others feel. Talk about situations and places in their community or in the world where the sharing of food would make a difference to many lives.

### A Picnic Rug

all age

*You will need: long strips of different coloured material (length will depend on how big you wish the finished rug to be, but about fifteen 120 x 15 cm strips would give a fair-sized woven rug), duct tape, and scissors.*

Lay out about seven strips vertically and starting at the top, show the children how to weave one of the other strips horizontally 'over and under' each strip. Explain that the next one needs to start 'under then over' to create the pattern and then let the children work together to weave the rug. When completed secure along each and using duct tape to keep the strips in place.

Talk with the children about times when they have gone on a picnic and what they would usually take with them. Talk about the little boy in the story taking his five loaves and two fish and how he was willing to share his food with the others. Talk about everyone then being able to get a little something to eat because he was willing to share what he had. Discuss the importance of sharing what we have with others.

# age group ideas

## games

### River Cruise

age 3-5

Split the children into two groups. One group will sit on the floor and pretend to be in a boat and the others will be at the side of the room as though on the bank of the river. When the game starts, the children in the boat pretend to row and move along the floor on their bottoms to the opposite end. The other children need to run around the whole room. Who gets to their finish point quickest? Swap places.

Jesus was in the boat trying to get time to himself, but crowds of people follow him. Do the children like to be on their own? If they are hurting who do they run to? If they need something who do they run to? Many people needed Jesus so they ran and followed him.

### Clock In The Tower

age 6-12

An old traditional game where the children sit in a circle and are numbered in sequence (1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4 ...) 'IT' sits in the middle of the circle and calls out "Clock in the tower strikes the hour" and claps their hands either once, twice, thrice, or four times. Every child with that number jumps up and runs around the outer circle back to their space with IT chasing them. If caught they switch places.

The people following Jesus had been out for hours and were hungry. The hour had struck when they needed to be fed. What time do the children normally eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner? Do they have snacks in between? Do they give any food/snacks to food banks? Would they try to help a homeless person in the street to get a cup of coffee? We have so much in our lives while some people go hungry and thirsty, not only here in Scotland but across the world. The hour has come for us to help others where we can, even if it is just speaking about it and telling others.



## activities

### Compassion!

age 6-12

*You will need: leaflets/posters and information on a number of charities that are in your area (such as foodbanks, homeless, care homes, whatever is local to you) and images of animals (such as puppies, kittens, rabbits, and ponies).*

Show the images of the cute animals and ask the children to vote as to which one they would give money to if an appeal went out? Then show the images of the charities and again ask which one they vote to give their money to? Why did they vote the way they did? Do the children know what these charities do? Are they just local or nationwide? Discuss what each of the charities do, how they raise awareness and funds, and what the benefits of helping these organisations are for them and for us.

What is compassion? Why do some people feel compassion for some things and not others—the answer is personal experience. When you give your time, money, and talents to a charity you are showing compassion. Jesus showed compassion when he helped to feed the people who were in the middle of nowhere.

### Plan Of Action

age 9-12

*You will need: pen, paper, and information on any emergencies that you want to talk about.*

A number of years ago there was a huge snowfall in the Angus area and many people were trapped in their cars on the A90. The town of Forfar came together that winter and opened up homes, church halls, school halls, and gathered in enough food to feed an army as well as sleeping bags, toiletries, and so much more.

We have also seen the Grenfell Tower disaster. The response to the Grenfell Tower is well documented, for good and ill.

As this material is being prepared we are in the middle of the lockdown for the Coronavirus. Many people are trapped in their houses due to health issues and age. and in the pandemic people were shopping for others, phoning them, taking them to hospital appointments, and so much more. Talk to the children about emergencies and what people can do to help. Talk about the various agencies that are available to help in emergencies also.

Ask the children to come up with a plan for an emergency in your area—snowed in, floods, no electricity or gas—what would they do, where would people go, what would people need?

In most emergencies, people have compassion for those in need, but we cannot give to everything and therefore must prioritise. How would the children prioritise the giving of their time, money, and talents? Have the children heard of Just Giving? Do they support Children in Need or Red Nose Day—these are all acts of compassion—just different from the ones Jesus did.

## Picnic Lunch

all age Leftovers

all age

*You will need: ask children the week before to bring in some food for a Sunday Picnic Lunch that they can share with others, paper plates, and napkins.*

As the children arrive, put their covered food on a table and watch it spread out. Talk about the different foods that everyone has brought and if all the food brought would feed everyone, do they think it is not enough or too much. When selecting and eating the food, did the children share with each other? Were others greedy and did anyone go hungry?

We have enough food in our lives that we can share quite easily but some do not want to. Jesus tells us to be fair, kind, caring, and loving, and we can easily do that if we put our minds to it and ask for God's help.

*You will need: images of leftover food, a few cans of food, leftover packaging from food parcels or delivery boxes, leftover clothes after you have cleared out, old batteries, spectacles, phones, used envelopes with the stamps on them, or similar items.*

Display all your items on a table in sections: clothes, food, flowers, paper, cardboard, glass, and so on.

- What are your eyes drawn to?
- Are all of these items for the bin because they are leftover items, no longer needed or wanted?

As the children look at the items, they should think of what could they do with them. For example: crisp packets can now be recycled, where in your local area can you go to recycle them? What are the local charity shops in the area?

In the feeding of the 5000, there was still bread and fish left over and it would have been put to good use. We need to our best to put our leftovers to good use in any way we can. We can have compassion for other charities and also for our environment.





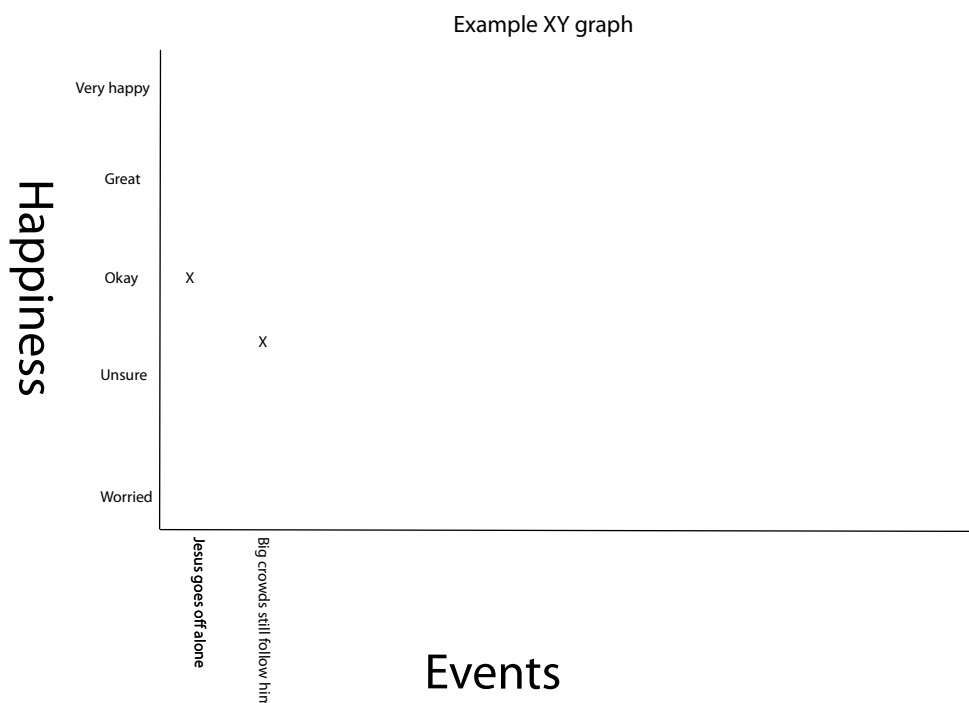
# discussion starters for teens

## plotting the ups and downs

### Preparation

For the discussion activity, the group is asked to draw an XY graph and plot emotions on it. If you need a primer on an XY graph, the basics are in the first section here <https://www.mathsisfun.com/data/scatter-xy-plots.html>.

An example graph is shown here and is available in larger size on [page 119](#) that can be photocopied if necessary, shared via screen or printed out and displayed on webcam if needed. If you are meeting as a physical group, blank paper and a selection of pens will be needed.



### Opening Activity

#### Hide And Seek

The traditional game works well in large groups in one physical location or virtually. If being done virtually, the players would have to hide within camera view.

#### The Word

Read Matthew 14:13-21 together.

Encourage everyone to imagine the different emotions of the disciples at each stage of the story.

### Activity/Discussion

#### Emotions

- What emotions would the disciples have been feeling about:
  - Jesus, going off on his own without them?
  - the large crowd?
  - Jesus healing the large crowd?
  - the large crowd's need to eat?
  - Jesus telling them to feed the crowd?
  - the small amount of food they had?
  - going to give out the small amount of food?
  - seeing how far this small amount of food went?
  - collecting the leftovers?

#### Events

Create an XY graph and try to plot the different emotions of the disciples, from happiness to panic, for each element of the story. Once you have plotted how the disciples were feeling, draw a curve to show the experience. Compare the graphs everyone has drawn.

- What does the graph tell you about spending time with Jesus?
- Where are people happiest with Jesus?
- Where are people most panicked about spending time with Jesus?

### Living It Out

Draw a blank XY graph with a happiness scale as in the disciple's example above. Take the blank graph and think about how last week went. Try and plot in your mind the week's ups and downs. Knowing Jesus does not mean the ups and downs of life will stop. It means you go through them with Jesus.

End with a prayer such as the Sending prayer on [page 80](#).







pentecost 10  
sunday 9 august 2020

# stepping out, getting wet

## bible notes

### Grace's Gift

**W**ith a new young puppy Golden Retriever added into the family joining a Rough Collie and a Pomeranian it is continually astonishing to see the attributes for which they were bred on display each and every day. The Pomeranian is not really interested in any of the other dogs, either at home or at the park, but will gladly sit in your lap for hour after hour. The Rough Collie is utterly focussed on the task at hand, usually fetching a ball, and countenances no distractions, other than to be continually doubling-back to gather in any stray wanderers when out for a walk in the woods.

And then there is the Retriever puppy... The very first time she was taken for a walk alongside a river she jumped straight in! There was no fear, no second thought, just a conviction that this was her purpose, her huge paws making easy work of paddling back to the river bank.

Did Peter have the same conviction as a Golden Retriever to leap into the water in this week's story? It is a bit more complicated than that.

No matter how good we think we are at walking on water, one day we will start to sink. No matter how firm or fragile our faith, the waves will soak our legs, the terror will break through our vision of Christ, and we will start to sink. This is not a story about being called to walk on water.

Pushing beyond the special effects, we could get bogged down in what seems to be Jesus rebuking and chastising Peter. It is undoubtedly a singular teaching moment for Peter. "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" scolds the

NRSV. The CEB harangues "You man of weak faith! Why did you begin to have doubts?" However, there is leeway in the Greek. Given the intimacy of the moment and the immediacy of Jesus' help, a more pastoral tone seems in order. "Little one, you lack confidence in me. Is this what has caused you to waver?" It matches the words of comfort that Jesus has already voiced from the midst of the storm. "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid."

This is not a story about imperfect faith and transactional grace—you do this for me and receive this grace in return. Sooner or later we all sink like a rock. This is what it is to be human. And yet, Jesus chooses to build the church with waterlogged stones. Jesus acknowledges the storm, recognises and validates the fear. He encourages the exuberant Peter and then stands with Peter in the midst of the storm.

Jesus does not make an object lesson out of Peter's passion. God has little interest in such transactional relationships. Our choices for God are always trumped by God's choice for us in Jesus Christ.

In a boat, out of the boat, or safe on shore, God's grace is for us all. It is unearned. This is a story about grace and steadfast loving kindness. Our faith, our calling, our momentary miracles amidst the chaos of life flows from just such grace.

Genesis 37:1-4,21-28  
Psalm 105:1-6,16-22,45b  
Romans 10:5-15  
**Matthew 14:22-33**

# the story

## Be Careful What You Wish For

Andy: *(Is scribbling furiously on a notebook, pausing for a moment and scribbling again.)*

Ada: So, what are you doing, Andy? Writing a novel? Making a shopping list, writing another letter of complaint to the council?

Andy: I am making a wish list?

Ada: Ah what?

Andy: A wish list, you know a bucket list. Writing down all the things you would like to do before you die?

Ada: *(Under her breath)* I could make you die a lot quicker, Andy!

Andy: What was that, Ada?

Ada: I was just saying it sounds like a wonderful idea dear! What have you got on that list?

Andy: Now don't laugh, Ada, it is not complete yet.

Ada: NO... I promise I won't laugh

Andy: Okay. Number one: see St Mirren win the Champions league.

Ada: Er, that maybe should be on your miracle list, Andy!

Andy: Ada, you promised!

Ada: Okay. Sorry. Please go on.

Andy: Number 2: visit Australia.

Ada: You'll need a lottery win before you do that!

Andy: Number 3: do a parachute jump for charity.

Ada: Andy, you are scared of heights!

Andy: Four: run a marathon.

Ada: You...

Andy: Five: buy you that diamond ring I could never afford.

Ada: Oh... that's so sweet! But you'll need that Lottery win again!

Andy: Six: walk on water.

Ada: Andy, you can hardly swim.

Andy: Aye, but if Peter could do it so can I.

Ada: Well, Peter never actually managed to walk on water. He was too scared.

Andy: He can't have been scared of the water, he was a fisherman!

Ada: Aye, Andy, it was not the water he was scared of. When the wind got up, he couldn't keep his concentration and he began to sink.

Andy: Do people "begin to sink", Ada, or do they no' just plummet down into the murky waters!

Ada: Good point, Andy, but Jesus got a hold of Peter and hauled him to safety.

Andy: Just as well Jesus was there, eh!?

Ada: Well in the Jewish tradition the waters and the sea are symbols of chaos and uncertainty. It is chaos and uncertainty that frightens Peter more than the waters. He likes everything to be in black and white, and he takes everything literally which gets him into hot bother time and time again. A bit like you really, Andy.

Andy: Aye, yer right there ,Ada. I am a wee bit compulsive... er... do things without thinking sometimes!

Ada: You certainly do, and so therefore you should be careful what you wish for. Why don't you just talk things over with Jesus and see if you can come up with a more positive and realistic wish list or bucket list? The ten things you could do for Jesus?

Andy: Aye, well, that sounds better than drowning.

Ada: It certainly does, Ada.

## Retelling For Young People

### Who Do You Trust?

- Have you ever played the game "What's the time Mister Wolf?"

In the game, someone is chosen to be the wolf, and everyone else starts off in a straight line. Each person can ask the wolf what time it is, and if the wolf says it is two o'clock you take two steps closer to the wolf.

The wolf waits till everyone gets closer and when he says its "dinner time" he will try and catch as many people as possible to eat for dinner (although not literally). Invite kids to play the game.

- Have you heard the bible story where Peter asks Jesus if he can walk on water?

It reminded me a little bit about the game "What's the time Mr Wolf" because Peter is always trying to get close to Jesus, but every time he does so he takes greater risks. In this story he nearly sank into the sea until Jesus grabbed him and hauled him into the boat and saved him.

Peter only began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and noticed the water and the waves and the wind, and he got scared and lost sight of Jesus. Imagine what he could have done had he trusted Jesus and kept his eyes upon him.

- I wonder who are the people in your life that you trust today?
- I wonder what kind of things Peter could have done had he trusted in Jesus?

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

There is a lot of vulnerability in our bible lessons today. No one likes to feel that way, but our world can often be a place that highlights our weaknesses and fears. We often can have that sinking feeling that we don't have enough faith. Accentuate the positive!

Grab a bowl of water. Grab a sheet of paper. Grab a pen. Write down different words that you want to trust God with—family, faith, friendship, or anything you can think of.

Tear or cut each word out and place it in the bowl. See how it floats? Trust that God will grant you faith to place these things in the God's hands.

## Call to Worship

Joseph with his technicolour dream coat must have felt so very alone.  
Jesus withdrew to solitary places intentionally to be alone.  
Peter went to be with Christ and then felt incredibly afraid.  
Jesus disperses a crowd who were nothing but a gathering of individuals.

Gather today with the worldwide Church even if you feel alone.  
Withdraw with intention today to be with God.  
If you have any fear, bring it to Christ that he may help you walk.  
As the individual that you are, worship as you can.

## Prayer of Dedication

Set us free this day,  
Giver of Grace  
to give without expectation of return,  
to receive without second-guessing the motive.

Set us free this day  
to allow your words of life, peace and challenge  
to reorient and rededicate our lives,  
our congregations and our offerings  
that we might also set others free.  
Amen.



# worship ideas

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

You come to us early in the morning;  
wind howling, waves crashing,  
the world unravelling around us.

You come to us walking on the water,  
proclaiming peace when  
we feel anything but peaceful.

Somewhere in our fear,  
in our finitude,  
we decided that we  
must be water-walkers  
to earn your love.

Forgive us when we step out of the boat  
to test ourselves,  
to test you,  
to shore up our faith,  
our egos, our fear.

You do not call us out  
to test our faith,  
you call us out in love,  
to be love  
and you are ever by our side.

Comfort us  
when the waves rock the boat.

Steady us  
when the wind is up, and our guard is down.

Challenge us to live our faith  
from grace's perspective  
knowing you match our steps,  
stride by stormy stride.  
Amen.



## All-Age Prayer

Jesus Christ,  
you know what it is to be afraid  
and when you saw your friends soaked and scared,  
you came to them.  
While you were on your way,  
you called to them  
telling them it was okay to be afraid,  
that you were with them on the water.

When Peter shouted out,  
so excited and courageous,  
you invited him to step out—  
not to prove his faith  
but to share your love.

And when the fear started  
to beat harder in his heart  
and his feet got wet with the waves,  
you reached out your hand,  
loved him,  
and together you walked back to the boat.  
Remind us that we are always safe with you.  
Challenge us to make more safe places for each other  
especially when we see other people scared.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

For the days that the sound of the sea  
is more Rock 'n' Roll than the Blue Danube  
walk to us, God,  
over the wind and waves.

When uncertainty and incivility crash and blow us about,  
and we choose the immediacy of partisan politics over the  
pastoral patient presence of your kingdom.  
Call your peace to us, God,  
over the wind and waves.

As hidden hurricanes lay waste to our souls  
while, outwardly, we stroll in the eye of the storm.  
Walk with us, God,  
through the wind and waves.

In the threatening threshold of dawn's uncertainty  
may your voice roll upon the waters  
filling our hearts with peace  
and our heads with courageous kindness.  
Unlink our courage and commitment  
from our need for success.  
Disconnect the assurance of your incarnation  
from the perfection of our faith.  
Make us bold in our loving,  
less afraid of failure,  
and more accepting  
of the dynamic dance  
of faith and doubt;  
wind and waves;  
life and eternity.  
Amen.



## Reflection

Jesus?  
Are you real?  
If it is you, command me  
to come to you on the water;  
to come to you out of the box;  
to come to you from my comfort zone.

Jesus?  
What if?  
If it is you, calling me  
to step out to sink;  
to jump out to doubt;  
to leap out to fear.

Jesus?  
Are you there?  
If it is you, hear me  
and save me from drowning;  
save me from insecurity;  
save me from the danger.

Jesus?  
Is it really you?  
If it is you—isn't that what we do?  
The wind of media, political and social horror  
that threatening of our stability of life.

Jesus?  
Did you say "Don't be afraid, I am here"?  
But we still test the waters around us:  
"If it is really you, tell me..."

## Take Home Ideas

- What has kept you from sinking?

Take time to consider (perhaps write down as a list) times in your life when you have found yourself starting to have that sinking feeling. Troubling, challenging times when naturally it has been difficult to cope emotionally and sometimes physically.

We all have these times.

- What prevented you sinking?
- Who stopped you from sinking deeper?
- How did you manage to stay afloat?

Hopefully we recognise the hand of God in those moments.

Be thankful for the people, the self-resilience and the help that was available to you as you managed these difficult times.

## Sending

Jesus, you are the Son of God.  
Even the wind and the waves,  
the stormy seas,  
are calmed by your Spirit.

We might never walk on the surface of water,  
as if immune to life's troubles,  
yet, neither do we need to sink.  
For you, Lord, are with us.  
Your hand is upon us.  
Your love is for us.  
Your commitment to us is endless.

Thanks be to God,  
and to the Son,  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
today and always.

## Praise/Hymns

A little more see [page 112](#)

Dear Lord and Father of mankind CH4 485 / MP 111

Eternal Father, strong to save CH4 260 / MP 122

How firm a foundation MP 243

I believe in Jesus MP 264

I was sinking deep in sin online at  
[https://hymnary.org/text/  
i\\_was\\_sinking\\_deep\\_in\\_sin\\_far\\_from\\_the](https://hymnary.org/text/i_was_sinking_deep_in_sin_far_from_the)

In Cana at a wedding feast online at  
[https://www.carolynshymns.com/  
in\\_cana\\_at\\_a\\_wedding\\_feast.html](https://www.carolynshymns.com/in_cana_at_a_wedding_feast.html)

Isn't he beautiful MP 344

Jesus calls us o'er the tumult CH4 509 / MP 359

Jesus' hands were kind hands CH4 351

Lord, I pray, if today CH4 541

Lord Jesus, think of me CH4 491

Lord, speak to me, that I may speak CH4 542

Make me a captive, Lord CH4 534

My life flows on in endless song CH4 565

O where is he that trod the sea online at  
[https://hymnary.org/text/o\\_where\\_is\\_he\\_that\\_trod\\_the\\_sea](https://hymnary.org/text/o_where_is_he_that_trod_the_sea)

When the storms of life are raging CH4 570

# age group ideas

## gathering

### Picnic

all age

*You will need: blindfolds, cushions, bean bags, cones.*

Organise a little 'Trust Walk' by laying out an obstacle course using the cushions, bean-bags or cones. Sort the children into pairs and blindfold one and then get the other one to lead them carefully around the obstacle course using verbal instructions only. Swap the children over so that each has a turn at going along the course.

Talk with the children about how it felt to be guided around the course while unable to see. Talk about their feelings and their fears. Discuss how they overcame those fears e.g. by trusting the person who was leading them and focusing carefully on their voice.

Use this as a way into the story today.

## games

### Lighthouse

age 9-12

*You will need: lots of room to move around.*

The game begins with the group sitting in a circle. One person is chosen to sit in the middle. Another person is the "battery", and a third person is the "lighthouse". Everyone in the circle holds hands. The battery passes a current around the ring by gently squeezing hands with the person to their left or right. Players pass the current from hand to hand until it reaches the lighthouse. The lighthouse makes a loud fog horn sound when their hand is squeezed. After practising the pattern a few times, the person in the middle closes their eyes. Silently select a new battery and lighthouse. The person has three tries to guess the identity of the battery. If the battery is correctly guessed, then the person in the middle gets to start the next round; otherwise, the battery gets to select. A new person for the centre is selected, and play starts over.

How can we help others navigate stormy times? What does the Gospel lesson teach us about helping others when they are afraid?

### Walking On Water Relay

all age

*You will need: footprint cut-outs.*

Divide the group into teams. Place footprints in a path from the starting line to the finish line. The challenge is to run the relay using only the footprints. If you step out of the prints, you have to start over.

It is a challenge to do normal things under difficult circumstances, much less trying to walk on water in a wind storm. How did Peter feel when he was trying to walk on water? How did Jesus help him? How did Jesus help the disciples? How can we help each other in challenging times?

## activities

### Surface Tensions (Part 1)

all age

*You will need: large soup bowls or glass bowls, black pepper, paper clips, 1/4 sheets of A4 paper, soap and water.*

Demonstrate the surface tension of water to tell the story of Jesus calming the storm and the difficulty of walking on water. Fill a bowl with clean water. Fold the ends of the paper to make a point on one end. Float the "boat" in the middle of the bowl. Touch a finger to the soap and touch the water just behind the boat. The boat should shoot to the edge of the bowl. Talk about the boat drifting out during the night. (See <https://youtu.be/WsksFbFZeeU?t=61>)

Fill another bowl with clean water. Sprinkle black pepper upon the surface and talk about the wind and waves covering the water. Touch a finger to the soap and then lightly touch the water at the centre of the bowl. The pepper should shoot to the edge of the bowl, as the soap disrupts the surface tension of the water.

In a fresh bowl with clean water, try floating a paper clip upon the water. You may need to rest the clip on a fork and gently dip it into the water. Talk about the difficulty of floating much less the miracle of walking on the water. When you are successful in floating the clip, touch the soap, and then the water and the clip will sink. (See <https://youtu.be/WsksFbFZeeU?t=115>)

Talk about how hard it must have been for Peter to keep focused on Jesus, yet Jesus was right beside Peter anyway. If time and supplies allow, invite the children to try floating a paper clip and clearing away the pepper. See the videos below for hints and help with the science side of the activity.

Jesus not only speaks peace and calms the wind, but Jesus also supports Peter as he tries something bold and daring.

### Surface Tensions (Part 2)

all age

*You will need: a large shallow pan, milk, food dye, cotton buds and soap.*

Pour 1/4 -1/2 inch of milk into the pan. Gently drop several different colours of dye into the middle of the pan. Touch a cotton bud to the soap and then touch and hold the cotton bud to the milk at the centre of the pan. Different colours will shoot out of the centre towards the edge of the pan as the soap breaks the surface tension. (See <https://youtu.be/WsksFbFZeeU?t=2>)

Making love visible. We cannot always see how soap works. By using milk and food dye, we can see how soap changes the surface tension of the milk and sends colours shooting out. One of the ways we can honour God and share God's love is to make that love seen. Ask the children how they can show God's love this next week.

# crafts

## Emotions

age 3-5

*You will need: small paper plates, felt-tip pens, scraps of material, wool and paper, googly eyes.*

Give the children a plate and get them to draw a worried, fearful face on it and then use the other materials to decorate the face, giving it hair and features. Now give them a second plate and get them to draw a happy, contented face on it again adding features.

Talk with the children about the story and let them imagine how they would feel if they were on the stormy water in the boat like the disciples and talk about their feelings. Which of the faces they have made might they have? Talk about Jesus coming to the disciples and again let them talk about how they might be feeling. Which face would they have now? Talk about Peter stepping out to the boat and let them tell you how he might be feeling. Discuss if Peter's feelings might change if he forgets to look at Jesus and trust him. Ask the children if they have ever been afraid and what helped to change their fearful face back to a happy face such as did they speak or listen to someone they trusted?

## Boats

age 6-8

*You will need: walnut shells, cocktail sticks, gummed paper, scissors, Blutak, basin, water.*

Give each child a walnut shell and a piece of Blutak. Make sure they have the shell looking like the hull of a boat and then ask them to place the Blutak into the bottom on the shell and push it into place. Give them a small piece of gummed paper and get them to cut it into a triangle shape and then fold the triangle in half. Open it out again and place the cocktail stick along the fold and stick both sides of the gummed paper together to make a sail. Finish the boat by pushing the cocktail stick sail into the Blutak. Fill the basin with some water and let the children see if their boat will float.

Talk about the story and the boat being tossed about on the water. Discuss how the disciples might be feeling. Discuss whether they think the feelings of the disciples might change when they see Jesus and if they do why, such as that they trust Jesus. Talk about times when they have been afraid and if it helped when they saw someone they trusted and loved.



## Walking On... PAINT!

age 9-12

*You will need: a roll of lining paper or wallpaper, paint, paint trays, paint brushes, basins, towels, wet-wipes for cleaning feet afterwards, protective sheeting for under the lining paper.*

*Note that this is a very messy one; if the weather permits, you may want to do it outside.*

Lay out your protective sheeting and place the lining paper on top of it. Prepare trays of paint. Ask the children to remove their socks and shoes. Explain they are going to put paint on their feet and walk along the length of the lining paper leaving their footprints behind them to give them the feeling of what it must have been like for Peter to walk on the water as they walk on the slippery paint. Let the children cover their feet in paint by either stepping into the paint tray or painting their feet with paint before then walking along the length of the paper taking care not to slip. At the other end get them to clean their feet off, make sure no paint remains, and pop their socks and shoes back on by which time their footprints will be drier and they can write their name next to one of their footprints. Three or four people can walk along a length of paper if you use different coloured paint!

Talk with the children about Peter trying to walk on the water. Discuss what happened when he was focused on Jesus and what happened when he was not trusting Jesus. Discuss how doubt or worry can make them feel. Encourage them to think of how they can keep their focus on Jesus today and let them suggest ways in which they might stop themselves doubting and worrying and instead trust in Jesus.

## Listening Ears

all age

*You will need: strips of card, thin card, crayons, pencils, scissors, sellotape, stapler, staples.*

Give each child a long strip of card about 4 cm wide and ask the children to draw patterns onto the card with the crayons. Make their patterned strip into a head band which can sit just above the child's ears, securing the ends with staples. Give each child a sheet of thin card and ask them to draw ears on the card, any sort of ears: human, cartoon, animal—whatever they prefer. Now ask the children to colour them in and cut them out. Get the children to stick the ears on at an appropriate point on their headband using the sellotape and their ears are ready to wear.

Talk with the children about their gathering activity and how they had to keep their focus on the voice of the person leading them. Ask if it was always easy to keep focused or if they sometimes got distracted by how they were feeling inside e.g. fearful or frightened they might fall. Talk about the story and about Peter having to keep focusing on Jesus' voice and what happened when he stopped trusting Jesus. Encourage them to think about the voices they should listen to today to help them stay on the right path.

# discussion starters for teens

## give me a sign!

### Preparation

I have suggested playing Pictionary for the Opening Activity. Pictionary is an excellent game at the best of times, but if you have to meet via a virtual conferencing app, it becomes more fun. If time is a concern, perhaps only have yourself or one of the other adults to draw the clues for everyone else.

### Opening Activity

#### Pictionary

Play a few short rounds of the drawing game, trying to guess the word that you are trying to draw.

#### The Word

Read Matthew 14:22-33 together.

### Activity/Discussion

Today's story seems to have a physical aspect to each part. Jesus being absent; being like a ghost; Jesus walking on water; the stretching out of an arm and stopping the sinking of Peter.

British Sign Language is used as a way to turn spoken word into action, so communication can happen with people who cannot hear well or at all.

- Can you think of some things that are shown but not spoken? (Negatively, swear words are often in signs, not spoken; positively, a greeting can be a handshake or a hug.)
- What do you often show as a sign instead of speaking?
- How do you show signs, in school, in church, in family situations? Are they different?
- How do other people show signs to you?
- Is there a sign you remember very well?
- What sign do you show to keep someone safe?

Peter gets out of the boat and trusts that the signs are Jesus. He is distracted by the wind. And Jesus stops him from fully sinking!

- What signs does Jesus give us?
- How and where do we see Jesus in everyday life?
- What often distracts you from seeing Jesus?
- What signs are there that Jesus loves us and wants to keep us safe?



### Living It Out

Ask each member of the group to film this Bible story within a TikTok time limitation. Tiktok is a video app where your video is time-limited between 3-15 seconds (for music videos) and 3-60 seconds (for looping videos). As it is short, it has to be creative. Ask each member of the group to show their video to each other next week. People can be as original as they can to make the short video format.

Perhaps the Violent Femmes song "Jesus Walking on the Water" is an appropriate starting point if people would like a hint of ideas.





pentecost 11  
sunday 16 august 2020

# stepping out, focussing in

## bible notes

### Shifting Grounds Of Grace

**O** Boy! This is a passage and a half. We could fill hours debating the niceties or nastities of what Jesus is saying. It is one of the delights in most religions to get bogged down in long discussions on the details and nuanced arguments about the finer points.

With today's passage you need to read verses 10-20 along with the main story to see hear properly the shock of what comes out of Jesus' mouth when he speaks to the Canaanite woman.

It is a double passage about purity and what is socially acceptable and pure. Jesus is not trying to do down Jewish custom but he is trying to teach his disciples, once more, what is at the heart of the matter. Again, like all good religion, we can dance round the details but we never actually get to the central hub of what is going on. This is Jesus' attempt at that.

The tall and the short of it is Jesus is saying that you have to move past all the cultural stuff we do and the social niceties in order to get to the heart of what God is about. The details on how we get there are not as important as the ability to recognise what it is that God desires.

But, of course, that is not as easy as it sounds. We are culturally hard-wired to repeat these conventions even when we do not think we are. We live by a bundle of unspoken rules and guard our place in society, and how we respond and react to people. Each culture has caricatures about their generational conventions. For the UK it may be a 'stiff upper lip', the US everything has got to be bigger, for Germany it is about keeping to the rules, and so on.

And we judge each other by these unspoken but ingrained

rules each culture lives by. So the Pharisees challenge Jesus in the fact the disciples do not wash their hands (not for hygiene purposes but for signs of being pure) and say that they cannot be holy because they do not carry out the rituals that show they are pure.

Jesus challenges them in return suggesting that what comes out of your mouth comes from your heart. That's how we can really see if someone is pure or not, implying the Pharisees are not pure because of what they have just said.

What comes out of our mouths makes us clean and not what we do. Hold that thought because that is how we then move into the story of the Canaanite woman.

They enter a foreign territory and immediately it is unclean. A woman (O dear!) who is on her own (What no chaperone? Breaking convention!) speaks to Jesus (Speaks!! How dare she do that!) and when she more or less ignores the disciples she breaks yet another social convention in doing so.

So outwardly everything about her is unclean and wrong and impure. Yet she then speaks and what she says is the purity of a gospel about universal love. She speaks from the heart about her daughter and how they too have a place in the kingdom. What you say with your mouth illustrates the purity of your heart.

And of course the lovely twist is Jesus himself shifts in what his heart tells him and from some kind of cultural abuse of the woman at the beginning of the episode, his heart moves and he responds eventually with words of grace and welcome.

Genesis 45:1-15

Psalm 133

Romans 11:1-2a,29-32

**Matthew 15:(10-20),21-28**

# the story

## Peter Reflects

So I didn't get it.  
The Pharisees have always been strict about washing—  
washing plates;  
washing cups;  
washing your hands.  
It's the Law, they'll tell you.  
It's a matter of purity.  
Being clean!  
And they've always been strict about eating—  
eating only the right things;  
never eating the wrong things.  
It's the Law,  
for the sake of purity, again.  
Being clean.  
  
And then Jesus said none of that matters!  
How could he say that?  
He said it's not washing habits or eating habits  
that make a person right or wrong,  
good or bad,  
clean or not clean.  
He said being pure is a matter of your heart,  
not your skin and your stomach.  
  
So I was trying to work it all out,  
when we met this woman.  
A foreign woman.  
An unclean woman.  
Just as I heard myself think it,  
I thought, oh wait...  
what was Jesus just saying?  
It's what comes from your heart that matters.  
  
So I listened to the woman.  
I listened to her heart.  
She was crying for mercy,  
full of love and distress for her sick daughter.  
So desperate,  
she wouldn't let us chase her away.  
She wouldn't let Jesus say no.  
Pure love.  
Pure courage.  
Pure humility.  
Ready to settle for the scraps,  
the crumbs,  
if they were enough to make her child well.  
  
And Jesus saw her heart,  
and answered her cry,  
and healed her little girl.  
  
As for what he was saying about the Pharisees...  
I think I get it.

## Retelling For Young People

### Fussy Ryan

Once upon a time there was a boy called Ryan who was a very fussy eater. He wasn't allergic to anything. His Mum and Dad cooked delicious, healthy meals. His younger brother Chris and his younger sister Katy weren't fussy about food. But Ryan had very definite ideas about what he liked and what he did not like. Here are the things Ryan would not eat: mushrooms, baked beans, marmalade, Marmite, spicy sausages, spinach, jelly and trifle. He had never tasted any of them, but he had decided he would not eat them!

One Saturday afternoon, Katy and Dad were in the garden together and Dad decided he was going to do baked potatoes for dinner that night.

"Can I help prepare the fillings, Dad?" asked Katy.

"That would be great, Katy," said Dad. "We'll be the cooking team for tonight!"

"I'll go and ask the others what they would like as their filling," said Katy.

"Good idea!" said Dad, "I'll go and count out five nice big potatoes from the bag in the garage."

Katy went into the house and found her brothers with Mum, playing a board game on the kitchen table.

"Hello," smiled Katy, "sorry to interrupt for a minute. Are you having fun? Dad and me are going to be the cooking team for dinner and we're doing baked potatoes. Is that OK with everyone? I just wondered what fillings you would like best. I'm going to help Dad get them ready."

"Thanks Katy," said Mum. "I think I'd like baked beans and cheese!"

"Oh yes, me too, please," said Chris, "I love baked beans! What is Dad having?"

"I don't know yet," said Katy, "but you know Dad, he's sure to want some mushrooms on the side. He eats mushrooms with just about anything!"

There was a chuckle from everyone, knowing Katy was right!

"What about you, Ryan?" asked Katy. "We've got some tuna, plenty of cheese, and there's some coleslaw. Or I could make you some prawns with mayonnaise?"

"Tuna and coleslaw, thanks," said Ryan, "that would be yummy. What are you going to have?"

Now they all knew Katy adored baked beans and she quite liked mushrooms too! So what did she say?

"Oh, now you mention it, I'll have the same as you! Tuna and coleslaw. Right, enjoy the rest of your games time. I'm going back to the garden for a bit!"

Chris and Ryan smiled at each other after Katy had gone. Chris spoke first. "What a lovely little sister we have. She says the nicest and kindest things—always."

"Yes, she's the best!" agreed Ryan.

Later, at dinner time, Dad served up the baked potatoes, and Katy put bowls of cheese, coleslaw and tuna on the table. Then she gave a final stir to the saucepan of baked beans while Dad finished frying the mushrooms.

"Now, who'd like some of these?" he asked.

"Can I try one?" It was Ryan. What a surprise!

"Of course you can," said Katy quickly, winking at Dad. So Ryan tasted his first mushroom and discovered it wasn't too bad at all. Then he said to his surprised family, "I was thinking about how Katy is always so kind and nice in everything she says. She always takes care not to be rude or horrible, even when she's feeling sad or angry." He looked at Katy and went on, "You say kind things because

you're a kind sister. It made me realise that being a fussy eater is a bit silly, but being a fussy speaker is really important! From now on, I'm going to try and be a fussy speaker!"

"What a wonderful idea," said Mum, "let's all be fussy speakers, being careful to use kind and caring words as much as we can!"

Then Dad said, "And can I put one more question to all of you, and I hope it's kind?"

"What is it?" they replied.

"Would you like some baked beans?"

Everyone laughed and shouted, "YES!!"

# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Take some time to reflect on your current situation.

- What is most on your mind at the moment?
- If you had the chance to call out to Jesus as he walked by, what would you ask of him?
- What do you imagine him saying to you in response?

## Call to Worship

Leader: Listen and understand, says the Lord.

**All: We come with open hearts and minds to explore and uncover new insight.**

Leader: With story and encounter, argument and influence, passion and heartache,

**All: we share in the discovery of faith and community.**

Leader: Let us worship God.

## All-Age Prayer

Whoever,  
wherever,  
whatever we are,  
Jesus is there.  
He loves us being us.

He loves us when we are angry,  
he loves us when we are sad,  
he loves us when we are happy,  
he loves us when we are alone,  
he loves us when we are together,  
he loves us when we are ourselves.

The world might want us to be something else  
but whoever we are,  
wherever we are,  
whatever we are,  
Jesus loves us!  
Amen.



# worship ideas

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Living God,  
we come before you today  
as your people,  
a community of faith,  
a family of hope,  
a people of love.

We give thanks for your beloved son,  
our Saviour, our Guide, and our Protector,  
the Good Shepherd to all your beloved children,  
wherever we are, whomever we are, whatever we are,  
we are yours and you are ours.

We give thanks that your constant and unending love  
knows no borders,  
no ethnicity,  
no gender or sexuality,  
but is poured out freely upon each one of us,  
today and in perpetuity.  
In a time of uncertainty and fear,  
we ask that this love continues to sustain us  
through whatever trials we face.

As we seek to follow you in this ever-changing world  
we ask for the wisdom to see your light  
shining in every person we meet.  
Let your example of care and compassion for all people  
be our guiding force.

In the many times that we fail to follow in your footsteps,  
we ask, not only for forgiveness,  
but for boldness and surety in our ability to carry on,  
to return to your path.  
No matter how many times we may falter  
we pray that we will always know that you stand with us.

God of all,  
merciful and loving,  
we come before you,  
in faith, hope, and love,  
today and every day,  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

As you have given all for us,  
we offer ourselves in dedication to you our God,  
for your work, your mission, and your kingdom.

We offer these tokens of money  
as a sign of our determination to continue  
to bear witness to your unending love  
for all peoples.  
Amen.

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

Generous God,  
we pray for your blessing on this community,  
as we seek to find you in the midst of fear and trouble,  
as we search for hope in times of darkness,  
shine your light into the lives of each one of us,  
that we may know your love is with us always.

We pray for your whole church,  
a people attempting to live in your example  
and spread your message throughout the world,  
we recognise the difficulties,  
in this time more than any other  
that face those bearing witness to you,  
but we ask that all Christians will have strength in your love,  
to continue and to flourish.

We pray for the marginal,  
those on the edges of our society,  
living in fear or hurt,  
attempting to overcome great pain,  
without the comfort and security  
many of us take for granted.  
We pray that we, your people,  
will give everything to help them  
and that they will find support in you.

We pray for our global community,  
As the world seems ever smaller,  
Where one country is not immune  
from the troubles of another,  
we ask that leaders and citizens  
will follow your example  
of peace, love, and forgiveness,  
and work towards a better world  
for all peoples.

We pray that each one of us  
will show your love to the world  
welcoming friend and stranger alike,  
bringing your kingdom ever closer,  
Amen.



## Reflective Prayer

Have mercy on us!  
In the midst of our pain, and our fear,  
we cry out,  
for those we love,  
for our planet,  
for our neighbour and ourselves.  
The powerful ignore us,  
and yet we cry out.

Help us!  
We search for answers,  
for comfort and healing,  
and we are offered platitudes  
or well wishes.  
We need help,  
we need care and compassion.  
But the world offers strife and division,  
and yet we cry out.

Why?

Because our answers are in you,  
because your mercy is on us,  
because our help comes from you.  
We kneel before you, o God,  
our comforter and guide,  
our strength through the pain,  
our light in the darkness,  
and we praise you,  
as we cry out.  
Amen.



## Reflection

Mercy:  
doesn't need to be pristine,  
nor need to be huge.  
It doesn't need to be protected,  
nor kept in a pot  
with a lid and a lock –  
and oh-so-carefully  
parcelled out  
to those deemed 'deserving'.

And...

Just  
a  
crumb  
will  
do.

Mercy:  
is not like pie,  
nor is it mealy-mouthed or stingy.  
It can't be measured,  
cannot help itself  
cannot be contained.  
No matter how some try,  
still, it overflows  
the tables of power and privilege,  
subversively escaping in  
scraps and crumbs  
that are limitless,  
boundary-breaking  
and render tables irrelevant.

And...

just  
a  
crumb  
will  
do.

Mercy:  
is subversive,  
spilling out for all,  
even those deemed (by some) as:  
'undeserving',  
'different',  
'not one of us'.  
It re-draws the circle  
wider than the edges  
of our imagination.

Just

a  
crumb  
contains  
more than enough:  
more grace and love  
than we will ever need.

And...

just  
a  
crumb  
will  
do.

# worship ideas

## Take Home Ideas

Persistence!

Try to do something this week that is not achieved easily but requires effort and persistence.

Examples might be a crossword puzzle, Sudoku puzzle, beating your record on a game app on your phone or tablet, or even something daft like trying to thread a needle at arm's length.

Persistence is a quality shown by the woman in this story. She could have given up trying to get Jesus' attention, especially as he at first seemed reluctant to listen graciously.

Think about this woman's faith in Jesus. How she just had to take her problem to him. How she believed that he was the solution.

What faith!

Think about your own faith. Think about how much in your life you are ready to share with Jesus.

## Sending

Lord help me...

Lord help us...

Lord, hear us...

Lord hear the cries of your people....

Go into the week with faith.

Go forward into all that awaits in this week, with faith.

For the love of God is with you;  
surrounds and upholds you.

## Praise/Hymns

Behold, I make all things news *Come All You People*, WGP

Build up *Build Up*, Fischy Music

Christ's is the world in which we move CH4 724

Come all you people *Come All You People*, WGP

God is good CH4 178 / MP 185

I am a new creation MP 254

In Christ there is no east or west CH4 624

Let there be love shared among us MP 411

Let us build a house CH4 198

Make me a channel of your peace CH 528 / MP 456

Nothing can ever come between us Taizé Community

O Christ the healer we have come CH4 717

Sing of the Lord's goodness CH4 157

There's a wideness in God's mercy CH4 187 / MP 683

This is a day of new beginnings CH4 526



# age group ideas

## gathering

### Musical Chairs

all age

Lay out your chairs in a circle with the seats to the inside of the circle and gaps between each seat which a child can pass through. Have one less chair than the number in your group.

Give instructions to the children that they must take care when trying to reach a seat during the game!

Now play a game of musical chairs where the children have to run around the outside of the circle and when the music stops get inside the circle and claim a seat. Repeat as often as wished removing a seat each time.

Talk with the children about the woman in the story being someone from another land and therefore not liked by the Jewish people at that time—she was an outsider—just as they were when they were on the outside of the circle trying to get in. Talk about this woman trying to get to speak to Jesus and people trying to turn her away but she kept trying.



## games

### Gossip Or Telephone

age 3-5

*You will need: slips of paper, pens.*

Form a circle. Write a sentence on a strip of paper. Give the phrase to a person in the group. That person reads it and hands to the Leader. They whisper the sentence to the person next to them. The sentence is then passed around the circle, whispering in the ear of the next person. The last person writes down what they hear. Compare the final version with the written sentence.

It is very easy for us to get confused about what we say. Jesus urges us to be careful and kind with our words.

### Group Juggle

age 6-12

*You will need: five or more tennis balls or soft toys per group, room to move.*

Divide into groups of ten. Form a circle. The leader tosses the ball across to another person on the opposite side of the circle. The leader says the person's name before they toss the ball. That person picks someone else who has not received the ball and says their name before tossing. Continue until the ball makes it round the whole group. Each person only gets the ball once. The last person then throws it back to the leader. Practice the pattern a few times. Slowly start adding additional items. See if the group can keep five items going at the same time.

Our words can enable really cool things to happen. They can also hurt and break things.

## activities

### Nursing Home Notes

age 6-12

*You will need: blank cards, crayons, pens.*

Take time to decorate cards for a local care home or for distribution to folk who cannot always make it to Church.

Words can tear down or build up. This is an easy opportunity to build up with words of kindness and support.

### Food Bank Blessing An Activity Of Hospitality

all age

*You will need: tins of food, coloured paper, pens, crayons and markers, tape.*

Get permission in advance from a local food bank to decorate cans of food with pictures and words of encouragement from the Church. Cut out slips of paper in advance to fit a standard size can. Have the children decorate the paper with pictures and generic words of encouragement, perhaps even "with the thoughts and prayers of St. *Somebody* Parish Church."

God desires everyone to be fed physically and spiritually. Sharing God's love can feed the belly and the soul. Why not do both.



# age group ideas

## crafts



### Crumb Cakes

age 3-8

*You will need: 300g Digestive biscuits, 100g butter; 25g cocoa powder, 3 tbsp golden syrup, 50g raisins, a saucepan, wooden spoons, rolling pins, plastic zipper bag, shallow baking tray, a hob and a fridge.*

Place the biscuits into plastic bags and seal them, then let the children use the rolling pins or back of a wooden spoon to crush the biscuits into crumbs. Let the children watch as you melt the butter over a low heat and then taking it off the heat let them stir the cocoa powder into the butter, followed by their biscuit crumbs and the raisins. Mix it all together and then turn out into the greased baking tray. Put the mixture in the fridge to set (this should take about 15 minutes). When the mixture is set, cut it into small portions, place on a plate and let the children share the cakes.

Talk about the story and the unkind words which were spoken by Jesus to the woman. Discuss with the children if they have ever used unkind words or had unkind words spoken to them. Talk about Jesus changing his mind about the woman and saying kinder words to her and healing her daughter. Encourage the children to think of times when they have spoken unkind words to someone and then changed their minds about the person and share their stories together.

### Dogs And Crumbs

age 9-12

*You will need: squares of coloured origami paper, felt pens, self-stick googly eyes, instructions for an origami dog (best with video assistance as per this link: <https://www.wikihow.com/Make-an-Origami-Dog>).*

Let the children watch the instructions on the website and then to follow those instructions to create their own Origami dog with a sheet of the coloured paper. When folded they can either add eyes with felt pen or by sticking on googly eyes, then add a nose and a tongue.



Talk with the children about the woman being an 'outsider'—someone who was hated by the Jews. Discuss how she might have felt being called a dog and why they think Jesus called her that name. Talk about her persistence and her response to Jesus' words. Discuss with the children if they have ever felt like an outsider or had unkind words spoken to them. Talk about their emotions and feelings at such times. Discuss if they turned away in that situation or if they persisted in getting the person to speak in a kinder way to them. Encourage them to think if the person changed their mind as Jesus did.

### Healing Collage

all age

*You will need: A4 coloured card, plasters (different shapes, sizes, colours and patterns—have some fun ones with characters on too!), gauze, crepe bandages, lint, cotton wool balls and pads, scissors, PVA glue, glue spreaders.*

Talk with the children about the story and the woman coming to ask Jesus to heal her daughter. Talk about how the woman loved her child so much that she was very persistent and kept on asking for Jesus to help her. Discuss if they have ever had to try and keep on trying to get help with something. Talk about how they felt when they eventually got help. Ask them how they think the woman might feel when her daughter was healed after asking so many times. Talk too about her trusting that Jesus could heal her daughter.

Give the children a piece of card and explain that you would like them to make a collage of the girl being healed using the materials provided—explain that all of the materials provided are materials that we would use today to help heal people. Let them share their finished collage story with each other.



# discussion starters for teens

## breaking conventions

### Preparation

Think about some social conventions in your community/ country. Are there local things you do that are not written down but everyone knows about?

Have a personal story ready for a time when you have found yourselves the centre of attention because you broke a convention you did not know about, either in a different country or group.

### Opening Activity

As people gather, invite them to think about what they think about people from other nations and the traditional stereotypes we tend to hold.

- What are Americans like?
- What about Germans?
- What are Russians like?
- What are the French like?
- What do you think these other nations think about us? (stiff upper lip, we all wear kilts, we never cry, we do not hug, and so on)

Note that the point of this exercise is to explore our prejudices towards others by looking at the social conventions we use to judge others. It is not about other people in other countries, it is really about reflecting back on our own traits and attitudes.

- Ask what is wrong with some of the ways others live their lives?
- Why do we caricature others in these ways?
- What are we measuring their culture against?

The answer is, of course, that we measure other cultures against our own culture.

When that is the marker we use it begs the questions:

- What is so right about our own social conventions?
- Why do we hold our own social conventions higher than those of other peoples or countries?

### The Word

The bible passage is in two parts, one is about social conventions and the other is a story that illustrates what is said.

Jesus in the first passage (Matthew 15:10-20) basically says: it is what is in your heart that makes you pure, not all the rituals and rules of purity. These are meant to help, not hinder, right living. But sometimes they become the pit in themselves.

Think about some rules we have that have become a thing in themselves in our faith (baptism, rules about communion, who can go into the pulpit).



The story should be read by the leader but ask people to shout 'Stop' when some convention is broken in Matthew 15:21-28. The obvious ones are: Jesus is in foreign territory, a woman (which is bad enough), and who has no chaperone (not allowed) speaks to him (unheard of).

So the whole story is set up to illustrate all the conventions that have been broken. Yet this woman speaks purity from her heart: that she is part of the kingdom too (even the dogs can eat the crumbs). Purity is found in the last place you expect. It is what is in your heart, and not the rules you follow that illustrate your purity.

### Activity/Discussion

Think about the rules we have in our churches and communities that we take for granted and judge others against.

These are often unspoken and are not even written down but have built up over generations. For example what about: shaking hands, kissing cheeks, women pushing prams, no litter.

- Where is there space in our faith community to hear what people speak in their hearts?
- What can we do and how can we act in order to give people space to speak honestly and openly, who do not fit with our social and cultural conventions?

### Living It Out

- What new rules can your own group suggest to make it more open, and less tied to social, cultural or historical conventions?

Invite everyone to commit to begin living like that in this group.



pentecost 12  
sunday 23 august 2020

# stepping out, rocking on

## bible notes

Exodus 1:8-2:10

Psalms 124

Romans 12:1-8

**Matthew 16:13-20**

### Who Do You Say I Am?

Once more we have a slightly troubling passage today simply because of what is left out. This is the story of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Messiah and for many, that is fine as far as it goes: it serves as an illustration of the depth of faith and strong connection Peter had with Jesus.

But perhaps for just as many, the verses before this passage speak of Jesus' frustration with the disciples and their "little faith" as much as the verses that immediately follow this episode about going to the cross. These illustrate the reality that makes discipleship possible. Peter, as we know, is no perfect disciple, so his confession of Jesus has to be seen in the context of all the failures too.

Try and imagine Caesarea Philippi. It is a Roman city. It is where the culture was Roman. It is where the economy was Roman. It is where the religion was Roman. All around the streets would have been chapels to various Roman gods. They would have been unmissable. There was a plethora of them and Jesus and the disciples would have passed a great many of them as they wandered the market place and side streets.

It is in this context, surrounded by all these various gods, Jesus asks, "Who do you say I am?"

There is no hesitating here for Peter despite what has been happening in previous verses leading up to this point. He proclaims without hesitation, "You are the Messiah, Son of the Living God."

It is quite a formal statement. It is credal. Some would suggest that the early church have had their hands on this story and what Peter pronounces is a statement of faith

adopted in the early church.

Everything up to now in the gospel story has been more organic. The different encounters have been a bit of a hit or a miss with the disciples not grasping who Jesus is yet. Indeed, just a few short verses before Jesus is slapping his hand on his forehead and muttering, "O ye of little faith!"

But quite dramatically here we have a grown-up version of Peter, a formal statement from the man. Whether it is a story edited by the early church or is historically accurate does not really matter for the point is being made: this is who Jesus is. In among all the gods of the world, Jesus is recognisably different, the real deal set against the gods and empires of this world.

But it is a story that tastes better when we top and tail it with the verses that come before and after because there we see described disciples we are more familiar with. Indeed, there we see disciples that are more like us, who lack faith and fail to always 'get it', and yet who follow the cross.

It is a lot more messy in this broader context and more human that the formal beatific vision of Peter and is wonderful confession of who Jesus is.

But yet, may we live for those moments, when in the stoor and muck of the world, the confusion of different voices and powers in the busy marketplaces of religion and faith, we recognise God as who God is: the saving one, the one among us, the one who comes in love for all of us.

There are moments like that, moments we gather round, when we see and reflect the God we follow, moments when we see more clearly than others and know whose we are and who we follow.

# the story

## Whose Questions?

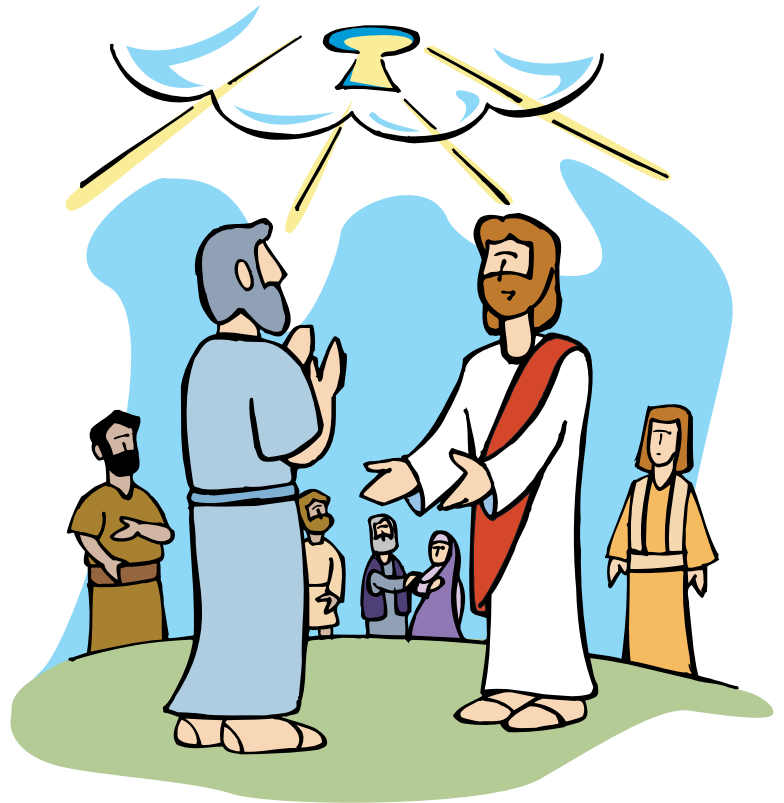
"Who do people say I am?"  
 It was your question, Jesus!  
 Your question to us,  
 not mine to you or anyone else!  
 It was you who asked what people are saying about you,  
 who they think you are.  
 I had the feeling it was a leading question;  
 a loaded question;  
 not really the question you were heading towards.

Of course people think you're like another John,  
 preaching repentance and talking to crowds  
 out in the wild places.  
 Or Elijah—with your command over natural forces  
 and the miracles you've done.  
 Or Jeremiah—not being popular with the authorities  
 and not appeasing people.  
 But you're more than a prophet  
 and greater than any other teacher.  
 And you don't care much what people make of you.  
 You do your work with a passion.

"But who do you say I am?"  
 Your question, remember!  
 Not one I was asking you.  
 What kind of answer did you expect?  
 We could all echo what our people had been saying...  
 you're like John, yes, like Elijah, like Jeremiah...  
 but more, more than any of them.

But not one of us said anything.  
 Except me, opening my mouth as usual,  
 and still remembering what you'd said  
 about how it is what comes out of us that shows us up.  
 The thing is, it felt like it didn't come from me,  
 well, not just from my own thinking,  
 but something bigger, deeper,  
 sudden but so sure.  
 You are the Messiah.  
 You are the Son of the living God.  
 And you confirmed I could not have known it,  
 said it, from my own ordinary human knowing alone.

But you had more to say.  
 "Who do you say I am?"  
 Jesus, I never asked you that question!  
 Whether I wanted to hear it or not,  
 you told me who you say that I am.  
 "Simon," you said, "you are Peter—'the rock'."



And I wanted to say I am no rock, Jesus!  
 I am no foundation stone for any building!  
 I am no starting place for a community!  
 Why would you trust me with a set of keys,  
 let alone the ones that open doors  
 to your Kingdom and to heaven?  
 Why would you give me the authority,  
 the responsibility,  
 to make choices on earth that will be echoed in heaven?

But if I can be so sure of who you really are,  
 how can I doubt what you say of who I really am?

That's a whole other question, Jesus...

# the story

## Retelling For Young People

### Nicknames

Lewis and Fergus lived next door to each other and were great friends ever since they started school together. But now that their school had closed because of the Coronavirus, they could only see each other by chatting online. One very rainy Saturday, they decided to invent a new game for other rainy days, when they had time to chat but it was too wet to go outside.

The game was to make up nicknames for all the animals that could be seen in their gardens and then make up stories about them.

There were three cats, belonging to other neighbours, who often came into Lewis' or Fergus' gardens. One was ginger and he would just sit for hours under the hedge keeping dry, or out on the path if it was sunny. One was black and he never stopped moving from spot to spot, twitching his tail and turning his head from side to side. The third cat was grey and he always ran away if the other two appeared. The boys nicknamed them Ginger Sitter, Prowling Blackie and Shy Smoky!

Then they made up stories about why the grey one was so shy, what the black one was looking out for, and what the ginger one was thinking about as he sat still for so long.

After they had made up those stories, Fergus and Lewis made up names for the birds that came swooping down to the bird feeders. There were a bunch of jackdaws who always came together, five or six of them, to peck at the nut feeder Lewis had hung up in his garden. Then they often flew over to Fergus' garden to try and take seeds from the feeder that was meant for the smaller birds—what thieves they were! Lewis called them the Nut Peckers, but Fergus called them the Seed Stealers!

There was also a magpie who came on its own and hopped hopefully under the seed feeder or flapped around the nut feeder but could never get near it with all the jackdaws there. Fergus called the magpie Hopper. Lewis called it Flapper.

Sometimes all the birds and cats would disappear in a rush when Lewis' mum let out their dog, Belle. She ran around the garden barking nonstop! Lewis and all his family always called her The Noisy Bell. Fergus thought she should be nicknamed The Clanger! That made Lewis laugh. He told Fergus he was going to give him a nickname: "Can I call you Joker?!"

Lewis was cheered up by his friend making him laugh on their rainy day as they told their funny garden stories about the Nut-Pecker-Seed-Stealers, Flapper-Hopper, Shy Smoky, Prowling Blackie, Ginger Sitter and The Noisy Bell.

Fergus loved being called Joker. "And here's what I'm calling you," he told Lewis, "you're now Boredom Buster!"

On Sunday, Joker and Boredom Buster got a message from their minister, with a Bible story and some activities to do. Joker saw the story first and couldn't wait to chat to Boredom Buster. "Look! Even Jesus gave a nickname to one of his best friends! He called Simon Peter 'The Rock'!"

The boys had a lively chat about why Jesus might have thought 'The Rock' was a good name for his friend. What do you think? Then they wondered what nickname they would give Jesus!

"I would call him Brave Adventurer!"

"I would call him Happy Friend."

What would you call him?





# worship ideas

## Through the Season

Please visit [pages 4-5](#) where you will find some ideas that people can use at home as linking activities throughout this season.

## Gathering Activity

Have a look around you wherever you are sitting in preparation for worship. Who do you see, or who lives nearby to you? Can you think of a nickname that describes a positive aspect of their character?

## Call to Worship

Leader: We, who are members of the one body,

**All: join together to praise God.**

Leader: We, who are blessed with the gift of grace,

**All: join together to sing of God's glory.**

Leader: We, who are part of the family of God,

**All: join together to affirm Jesus as Lord.**

Leader: Let us worship God together.

## All-Age Prayer

Leader: Loving God,  
we do not always see you,  
we may not always hear you,

**All: We might not always know it,  
but you are always there.**

Leader: You send your message to us,  
you speak to us in so many ways,  
through Jesus,  
through our friends and family,  
through our senses,  
and our dreams.

**All: We might not always know it,  
but you are always there.**

Leader: You have called each of us by name,  
you have shown your love for us in so many ways,  
through Jesus,  
through our friends and family,  
through our world,  
and our emotions.

**All: We might not always know it,  
but you are always there.**

Leader: Help us to be like Peter,  
to go and tell the world who you are,  
and when we forget, or cannot see you,  
help others to show us that:

**All: We might not always know it,  
but you are always there.  
Amen.**

## Prayer of Adoration and Confession

Creator God,  
we gather today  
in hope and expectation,  
we come to you as we are,  
overwhelmed by your actions,  
and in awe of your mercy.  
Our needs are filled in your love,  
and we lay at your feet our whole being,  
everything we are and everything we have.

We gather in this place  
and all over the world,  
to declare Christ the Messiah,  
our Saviour, our Guide,  
our Way, our Life, our Truth.  
Though our walls may crumble,  
we remember that we, your church,  
are built on a solid foundation of rock,  
and through your love we will never fall.

We gather, enveloped by your Holy Spirit,  
drawn close to you and to each other,  
in praise and thanksgiving,  
spurred into action by your life-giving presence,  
emboldened to love our neighbours as ourselves,  
and to preach your holy Word to the world.

We gather as one body  
of broken bones,  
seeking to do your work,  
praying for forgiveness when we fail  
to do what we can to live as you have told us,  
asking for support when we falter  
from the path of love for all.  
We ask for boldness to live in your example,  
to eschew the trappings of this world,  
to give ourselves wholly to your mission,  
and work tirelessly to praise you and love your people.

Ever loving God,  
we come before you  
in awe at your majesty  
in wonder at your works  
praising your holy name,  
this day and every day.  
Amen.



# worship ideas

## Prayers for Others and Ourselves

God of the sea, land, air, and space,  
we pray for your continuing blessing  
on our troubled planet.  
Just as Peter saw Jesus for who he is,  
we can see our world for what it is,  
your glorious creation, the gift of life,  
through knowing you,  
we ask for the boldness to do everything  
we possibly can to renew and rebuild our planet,  
to protect it for all who come after us.

As one body in Christ  
the eternal community of your church,  
we pray for guidance and support  
as we continue  
to bear witness to you,  
in a world where indifference  
far outweighs passion,  
we ask for ingenuity, confidence, and hopefulness,  
in order to bring your message to  
our communities and our world.

Living God,  
we pray for ourselves,  
for this community of your beloved children,  
that we may continue to be the lamp stand that  
allows your light to shine into the world.  
That we will use all the gifts you have given us  
to proclaim your message of love,  
to live the way you have told us,  
and never shy away from the difficulties that  
come with being a Christian in a time of  
individualism, fear, and persecution,  
help this community of the faithful  
to remain true to your teaching and bring the light of  
Christ to each person we meet.

As the summer ends,  
we pray for all your children, young and old.  
For those returning to school after the longest break,  
for those without work,  
for those with too much,  
for those who make sure we have food on our tables,  
and for those who labour tirelessly  
to keep us safe and healthy,  
we ask for your love and support,  
that whatever this new season will bring,  
they will find peace and surety in you.

God of all,  
We pray for your blessing  
on all that we are,  
and all that we do,  
that we may help build your kingdom  
today and every day.  
Amen.

## Prayer of Dedication

As you have bound us to your life-giving self,  
we come today in praise,  
to declare that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Messiah, our Saviour.

We offer these tokens  
of money, time and talent,  
as a sign of our continued commitment to your church,  
its mission and its work,  
that it might continue to be built through us  
as a solid foundation bearing witness to you,  
sharing your love throughout the world.  
Amen.

## Reflective Prayer

Who is he?  
A man from long ago?  
A story in a book?  
An idea of better times to come?  
A way to live our lives?  
A guide through a troubled world?  
A philosophy to teach us?

Who is he?  
How do we describe the Son of Man?  
Not rich,  
not warlike,  
not angry or loud,  
not a ruler,  
or a tyrant.

Who is he?  
What can we say about the Son of Man?  
Who comes among us,  
lives with us,  
hurts with us,  
feels with us,  
dies with us,  
loves with us.

Who is he?  
He is Christ!  
The messiah,  
God incarnate.  
Our saviour,  
our guide,  
our light,  
our life.  
Our everything!

Amen.

## Reflection

Labels:

John, the baptiser;  
Elijah, ravens' friend  
and occasional flame thrower;  
weeping Jeremiah, perhaps,  
in an echoing well?  
A prophet—  
just a random one—  
for any occasion?  
The expectations of the people  
are pinned on Jesus' jacket,  
but cannot  
pin him down.

Another label:

the One,  
the Son  
not just any old son...  
this One  
is of the Living God:  
not wood,  
not stone,  
but flesh and blood  
and bone.

Somehow,  
in the mystery,  
God has put skin on,  
trying on 'human'  
for size:  
becoming  
a waymarker  
pointing us  
to life  
less wooden,  
to hearts  
less stony;  
showing,  
in who God is,  
whose we are  
and what it means  
to fully live.

The expectations of the Promised Messiah  
are pinned to all our jackets,  
and we are  
pinned as Jesus' own.

## Sending

Jesus, you ask us—  
'who do you say I am?'

Help us know you.

Grow our understanding of who you are,  
what you stand for,  
and what you require of us.

Let the door to such knowledge  
and relationship be unlocked.  
Let your Kingdom be born in us;  
and through us be born into our world.

## Take Home Ideas

Take a set of keys into your hands and reflect upon what they unlock, open, or start.

These keys release you into a space you perhaps call home; into a place of comfort, activity or work that leads to accomplishment and fulfilment; or maybe grant the freedom to travel, get something done or experience the world.

The 'Keys of the Kingdom' are given to Peter because he gets it. He recognises Jesus for who he is. Such an understanding of Jesus (God), unlocks so much for Peter and the rest is history.

- Do we get God?
- Do we have the understanding of God, Jesus and the Spirit that allows us to go faithfully and confidently into the world?
- Is there more we could be doing by way of growing such knowledge and faith?

## Praise/Hymns

A little more	see <a href="#">page 112</a>
All hail the power of Jesus' name	CH4 457
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger	<i>Come All You People</i> , WGP
Father we love you	MP 142
God is good, we sing and shout it	CH4 178
Goodness is stronger than evil	<i>Love and anger</i> , WGP
King of kings	Hillsong Worship
I am sure I shall see the goodness	Taizé Community
I am the church, you are the church	CH4 204
Jesus' hands were kind hands	CH4 351
Jubilate, everybody	CH4 65 / MP 394
Majesty, worship his majesty	MP 454
Make way, make way	CH4 279 / MP 457
Praise the One who breaks the darkness	CH4 348
Someone is with you	Fischy Music
Take my life, and let it be	CH4 502 / MP 624
Tell out, my soul	CH4 286 / MP 631
The church's one foundation	CH4 739 / MP 640
You, Lord, are both Lamb and Shepherd	CH4 355

# age group ideas

## gathering

### My Name

all age

*You will need: a book listing the meaning of names.*

Talk with the children about their names. Ask if they know the meaning of their name. Share time looking up the children's names in the book and talking about the meaning of their name. Discuss if they think the meaning is an appropriate one for them, in other words whether their character matches the meaning of their name. Discuss if they are ever called by another name at home, a special family name or a nickname.

Use these discussions as a way into today's story.

## activities

### The Name Game (Song)

age 3-6

*You will need: a willingness to be silly.*

Sing The Name Game song with some willing volunteers. If you do not know this great old song you can get your lessons from the original Shirley Ellis see <https://youtu.be/-7NEYSKRJzA>.

Tell the gospel story and explore a few of the names of Jesus and what they tell us about God's way of being God in Jesus Christ.

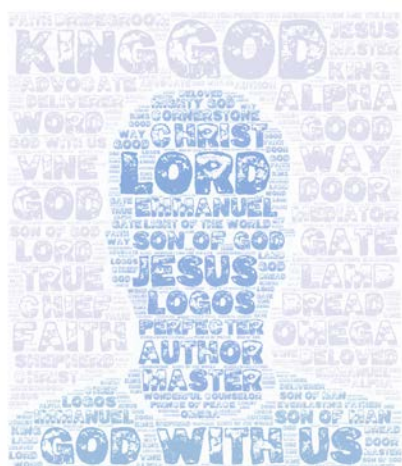
### Word Art

age 6-12

*You will need: word cloud or word art of the names of Jesus. You can make your own at <https://wordart.com/create> and you can find one prepared on [page 121](#).*

Print off sheets for each person. Ask them to take a look at the names used to describe Jesus. Circle any that stand out to them.

Many people have said many things about Jesus. How do the many names used about Jesus help or hinder our faith? Who is Jesus to them?



## games

### Roll The Ball

age 3-8

*You will need: soft ball.*

For younger children gather seated in a circle. The children should roll the ball to someone else while calling their name.

With older children you could stand and do the same, throwing the ball across the circle.

You could develop this with people adding a nice nickname that names a good attribute of the person: "Kind Katy", "Chatty Charlie", and so on.

### Who?

age 9-12

*You will need: room to move.*

Form a circle. The leader stands in the middle. They point to one person in the circle and say "Who?" and start walking towards them. That person responds by saying their name loudly and walking towards the leader. They shake hands and swap places. The pattern repeats until everyone has been named.

See the game played by its inventor: <https://youtu.be/gwGoesff7vw>.

A great intro into telling the gospel story and exploring who we are and who Jesus is. What would we hear if we played the game again and this time asked, "Who do you say that I am?" Who do people say that you are?

### Name Tag (The Game)

age 9-12

*You will need: room to move.*

Have the group sit in a circle. Make sure that every know each other's name or are wearing name tags. One person will go to the middle of the ring and begin the game. The person starts by saying their first name, followed by another person's first name. That person will then say their first name and another person's first name, and so on. The faster, the better. The person in the middle tries to tag another person before they can complete the sequence. If a person is tagged, they swap places with the person in the middle.

See link for a more ruckus version of the game - <https://youtu.be/b-XSkkwamjl>

What's in a name? Ask the group if they know what their names mean. Use this to transition into a discussion about the many names for Jesus..



# crafts

*This week we offer a few craft activities which relate to different images from the passage depending on your focus: 'the keys of the kingdom', 'Peter the Rock', 'new names', 'take up your cross'.*

## Keys Windchime

all age

*You will need: twigs or branches approximately 25 cm in length, a variety of old keys (five or six per child), broad and narrow Posca pens in a variety of colours (or acrylic paints and paintbrushes), string or strong coloured yarn, scissors.*

Give each child a branch and ask them to paint it in a variety of colours using the large Posca pens. Now give each child a selection of keys and ask them to paint each one a different colour or let them make each one multi-coloured using the narrower Posca pens. When the keys have dried (which they should do quite quickly if using the pens) let the children cut a length of the string or yarn for each key, trying to keep the lengths about the same so the keys will eventually knock against each other in the wind and make a sound. Get them to now thread each string through the top of one of their keys and fasten with a knot then tie the other end of the string to the branch. Make sure the spacing is not too wide or the keys may not knock together. To allow their windchime to hang, get them to cut a long piece of string and tie it to each end of the twig to form a loop that can then be hung over a nail.

Talk about keys and how we use them. Talk about the different people who are trusted to keep keys (different key-holders such as their mum or dad, the minister, the school janitor, the bank manager). Discuss why they might be trusted with the keys. Talk about the story and how Jesus said he was giving Peter the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Discuss why they think Jesus chose Peter and trusted him (because he understood who Jesus really was).

## Our Rocks

all age

*You will need: a light-coloured stone for each child, posca pens.*

Talk with the children about the story and the new name Simon Peter was given: Peter the Rock. Talk about Jesus trusting Peter and saying the church would be founded on him. Encourage the children to think about what that meant, for example: Jesus trusted Peter to build up the church after he was gone, to continue what he had started. Talk about how we sometimes describe someone as a 'rock' when we can rely on them and trust them to help us. Let them talk about who might be the 'rocks' in their life: the people they can trust and who they go to when they need help.

Give each child a stone and simply let them decorate it by either drawing the person they consider to be their 'rock' in life or drawing a 'church'—building or people!—to remind them of the church being built on 'Peter the Rock'.

## Name Plaque Swirler

all age

*You will need: A4 coloured card, felt pens, self-stick stickers and emojis, hole punch, rubber bands.*

Talk with the children about the story retelling and all the nicknames the children made up for the different animals and birds and themselves. Talk about how they often looked to a particular characteristic of the animal or bird to help them make up the nickname.

Talk about the new name Peter was given: 'Peter the Rock', and discuss why they think Jesus might have given him that name. What characteristics did Peter display to receive such a name (trusted, dependable and so on)? Sensitively ask them to think about the people around them and what nickname they might give them if they were looking to their character or strengths. If they find it difficult ask them to think of an alliterative nickname like Trusty Tom or Caring Catherine. Now get them to choose a nickname for themselves and discuss together the names they choose.

Give each child a sheet of A4 card, get them to lay it landscape and then ask them to make a Name Plaque for themselves using their nickname on one side and their own name on the other. The self-stick emojis can be added to give an insight into their character on the nickname side! Now get them to punch a hole at either end of their plaque and thread through an elastic band by pushing it through the hole and through the loop of the band and pulling to secure. Now if they twist the bands tightly and then let them go, the card should swirl from name to nickname.

## Cross

all age

*You will need: FIMO air or FIMO air light clay, pictures or examples of different holding cross.*

Talk to the children about the holding crosses and how different people often use them when praying. If you have examples let the children hold them in their hands to see the way they fit into their palm. Talk about the story and how Jesus told his disciples that if they wanted to follow him they would have to take up their cross. Talk with the children about what this might mean for them, like following Jesus' ways, praying to him, loving God and loving others. Discuss whether this might be hard or easy to do.

Give the children some of the clay and let them form their own holding cross. If using FIMO air, place on a paper plate and leave aside to air dry which may take a few days. If using FIMO air light then place in a microwave as per the instructions on the pack and their crosses should be set in about ten minutes plus cooling time.

# discussion starters for teens

## how is jesus important to me?

### Preparation

Prepare the game Twenty Questions gathering together a bundle of famous folk or objects or animals, one for each person there.

Some paper to write down, one per sheet, some of the 'gods' mentioned in the bible activity.

Prepare yourself to be described by the group on who they say you are.

### Opening Activity

#### Twenty Questions

Begin by playing Twenty Questions. Invite one person to take a card, not to look at it, but attach it to their forehead for everyone except themselves to see.

They are allowed 20 questions to work out who they are meant to be. The answers must be closed questions that can only be answered by a 'yes' or 'no'.

### The Word

Ask people to think about other gods that they have heard about: Roman, Greek, contemporary gods. They may be creative enough to think about things we worship as if they are gods: fame, wealth, power and so on.

As they are mentioned, write them on sheets of paper and hang them round the meeting space.

Retell the story from Matthew 16:13-20 but before you begin set the context for the passage saying that in Caesarea Philippi Jesus and the disciples would have been in the middle of a Roman town where they would've been surrounded by statues of Roman gods. It is in that context Jesus asks the question: there is a lot of choice in the world about who to follow, but who do you say I am?

### Activity/Discussion

As the leader, invite everyone to describe not who you are, but what you believe. Give them no direct clues but let them guess or from their relationships with you, describe what you believe.

If others are comfortable enough with this, invite them to stand in the middle of the group and ask everyone else to describe what they are about just from their relationship with everyone else.

Discuss how correct or incorrect the descriptions were.

- What did people use as evidence in describing others (not the details of past stories but more general things like how they know the person, what context have they known them, what they have seen them do, heard them speak about)?
- How would you describe Jesus to others?



Let's think of different contexts in which we can describe Jesus.

- To someone who is homeless who do you say Jesus is? What evidence is there?
- To someone who is vulnerable who do you say Jesus is? Evidence/stories?
- To someone who is a refugee?
- To the person sitting beside you?
- To your best friend?
- In your own context, what things are important to you when you talk about Jesus?

### Living It Out

Over the week, write down ideas and thoughts as they occur to you why Jesus is important to you.

- What values do you learn from him?
- What ways of behaving do you appreciate?
- What lifestyle is important that Jesus shows you?

This is a personal reflection for each person but perhaps one that can become part of your own devotional reflections during the week:

- Who has Jesus been to me these last few days?
- Then turn the whole thing round and ask: if that is who Jesus has been to me, how can I be like that to others?

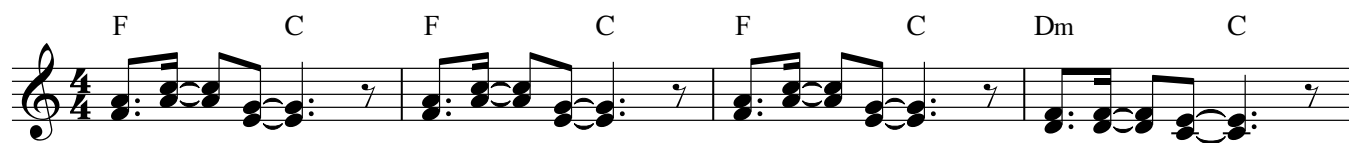


# extra resources and activity sheets

# A Little More

Stephen Fischbacher/Margaret McLarty

♩ = 90



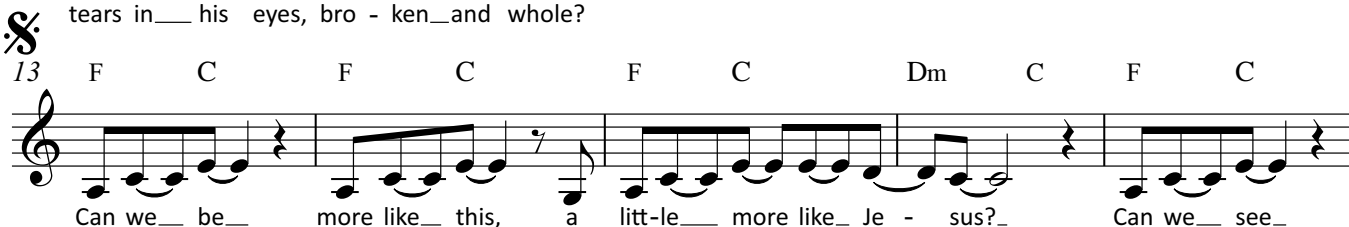
1. Who is\_\_\_ the one, gri - tty\_\_\_ and tough, stan-ding\_ his ground, so\_\_\_ full\_\_\_ of love?  
 2. Who is\_\_\_ the one that\_ sets peo-ple free, dar-ing\_\_\_ to question and\_\_\_ dis - a - gree?



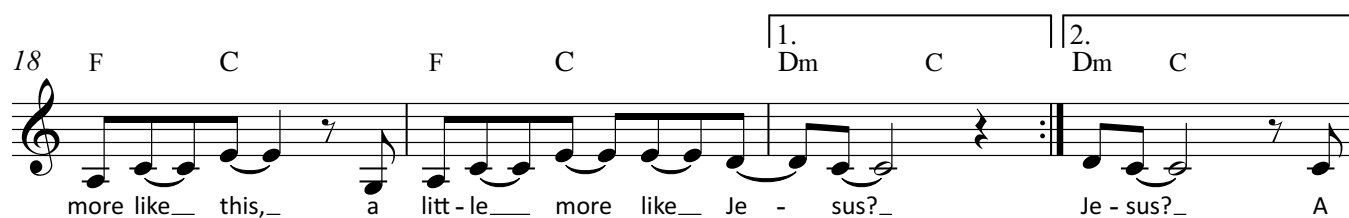
He is\_\_\_ the one\_ I want to\_\_\_ be-lieve\_\_\_ in. Who is\_\_\_ the one, so\_\_\_ full\_\_\_ of grace,  
 Who is\_\_\_ the one who\_gave it his all,



ca - ring\_ and brave, gives us\_\_\_ a place? He is\_\_\_ the one\_ I want to\_\_\_ be-lieve\_\_\_ in\_\_\_  
 tears in\_\_\_ his eyes, bro - ken\_ and whole?



Can we\_\_\_ be\_\_\_ more like\_\_\_ this, a litt-le\_\_\_ more like\_ Je - sus?\_ Can we\_\_\_ see\_\_\_



more like\_\_\_ this, a litt-le\_\_\_ more like\_\_\_ Je - sus?\_ Je - sus?\_ A



litt - le\_\_\_ more, a litt - le\_\_\_ more, a litt - le\_\_\_ more like\_\_\_ Je - sus?\_ A



litt - le\_\_\_ more, a litt - le\_\_\_ more, a litt - le\_\_\_ more like\_\_\_ Je - sus?\_



1. Who is the one, gritty and tough,  
standing his ground, so full of love?  
He is the one I want to believe in.  
Who is the one, so full of grace,  
caring and brave, gives us a place?  
He is the one I want to believe in.

*Can we be more like this,  
a little more like Jesus?  
Can we see more like this  
a little more like Jesus?*

2. Who is the one that sets people free,  
daring to question and disagree?  
He is the one I want to believe in.  
Who is the one who gave it his all,  
tears in his eyes, broken and whole?  
He is the one I want to believe in.

*Can we be more like this...*

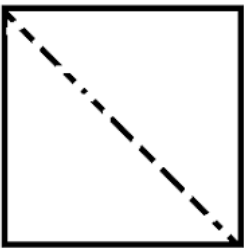
A little more, a little more,  
a little more like Jesus?  
A little more, a little more,  
a little more like Jesus?

© Fischy Music 2020

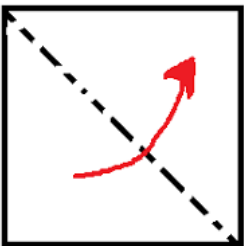
*An audio file and a backing track are available  
as part of the download pack that included this issue.  
Contact [peter@spillbeans.org.uk](mailto:peter@spillbeans.org.uk) if you cannot find these files.*

# The seed savers' make-out-of-anything samurai seed packet

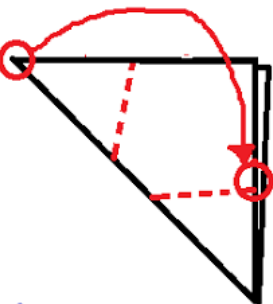
(that also happens to be far more functional than commercial seed packets)



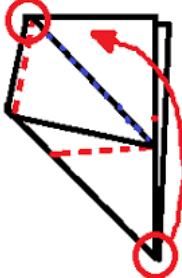
create a square by folding a triangle and cutting or ripping off excess.



fold into a triangle along previous fold line.



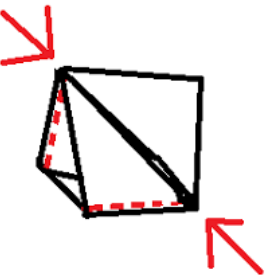
fold the bottom corn to the point indicated by the circle.



the blue dotted edge should be parallel to the original bottom edge of the big triangle. Fold the other wing over the first one, the same as the last step for the other corner.



take the forwardmost flap and slide it down into the little triangle-shaped slot in the 2nd wing you folded over.



give it a squeeze where indicated to pop the fella open.



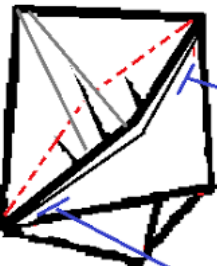
put all your crazy obscure heirloom open-pollinated double magic seeds into the pouch, then fold and slide the remaining upper flap into the triangle shaped slot with it's sister.



I write the name of the friend that shared the seed and the year.

- use it for seed exchanges
- ethical seed collection
- giving seeds to friends
- to impress your gardening friends with your resourcefulness

Illustration made in paint by Caleb Wornor calwornor@gmail.com



giving it a squeeze like you did before creates a little chute that channels the seeds into the palm of your loving hand, soil, or another container. (This is great especially for the tiny seeds)

# Seeds or Weeds?

Can you identify which plant is which?

Draw a line to link the pictures with the names.

Then write a "W" for weed next to the plants you think are weeds.



Daisy

Dandelion

Forget-Me-Not

Heather

Primrose

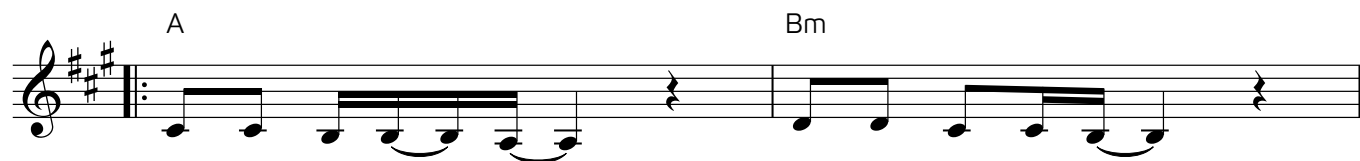
Tulip



# Tiny Little Seed

♩ = 80

Stephen Fischbacher & Suzanne Butler



1. Ti - ny li - ttle seed, \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Ti - ny li - ttle seed, \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Ti - ny li - ttle bud, \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. Ti - ny li - ttle flower, \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. Ma - ny li - ttle seeds, \_\_\_\_\_

floa - ting on the wind, \_  
 wa - tered by the rain, \_  
 op - en - ing its leaves,  
 in a - mong the weeds,  
 floa - ting on the wind, \_



Sett - ling where the weeds have ta - ken o - ver.  
 Si - lent - ly be - gin - ning on its jour - ney.  
 Reach - ing for \_ the sun - light in the heav - ens.  
 Prick - les and the thorns have ta - ken o - ver.  
 new life spring - ing from the bro - ken flow - er.

Ti - ny li - ttle seed,  
 Ti - ny litt - le shoot, \_  
 Del - i - cate and \_ new,  
 Such a cru - el place, \_  
 Beau - ty here to stay, \_



ly - ing in the ground,  
 peep - ing through the soil, \_  
 col - ours shin - ing through,  
 hard to find a space,  
 ne ver going a - way,

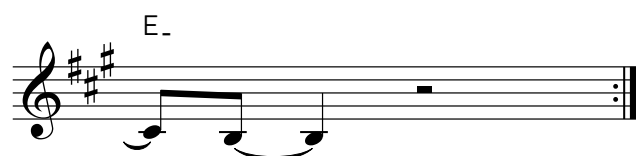
start - ing out its life \_ in the gar - den.  
 Putt - ing down its roots in the gar - den. TO CHORUS  
 giv - ing out \_ a fragrance in the gar - den. TO CHORUS  
 no more li - ttle flower in the gar - den. TO MIDDLE EIGHT  
 life has changed for - ever in the gar - den. TO CHORUS

## CHORUS



New life has be - gun, Beau - ty yet to come, Just one ti - ny seed can change the gar

MIDDLE EIGHT after verse 4



den.



Bro - ken... \_



O - pen... \_

Bro - ken... \_

O - pen... \_

TO INSTRUMENTAL  
 VERSE then verse 5



1. Tiny little seed, floating on the wind,  
settling where the weeds have taken over.  
Tiny little seed, lying in the ground,  
starting out its life in the garden.

2. Tiny little seed, watered by the rain,  
silently beginning on its journey.  
Tiny little shoot, peeping through the soil,  
putting down its roots in the garden.

*New life has begun,  
beauty yet to come,  
just one tiny seed  
can change the garden.  
(Repeat)*

3. Tiny little bud, opening its leaves,  
reaching for the sunlight in the heavens.  
Delicate and new, colours shining through,  
giving out a fragrance in the garden.

*New life has begun...*

4. Tiny little flower, in among the weeds,  
prickles and the thorns have taken over.  
Such a cruel place, hard to find a space,  
no more little flower in the garden.

Broken, (Broken),  
Open, (Open),  
Broken, (Broken),  
Open, (Open).

*Instrumental Verse*

5. Many little seeds, floating on the wind,  
new life springing from the broken flower.  
Beauty here to stay, never going away,  
life has changed forever in the garden.

*New life has begun...*

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*An audio file and a backing track are available  
as part of the download pack that included this issue.*

*Contact [peter@spillbeans.org.uk](mailto:peter@spillbeans.org.uk) if you cannot find these files.*

# Sharing Together He's Found

Peter Johnston

Chorus

Voice

The musical score is written for voice and guitar. It is in the key of D major (indicated by two sharps) and 3/4 time. The score consists of five staves. The first staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are: 'Praise to the God of all the earth, share in his grace and'. The second staff is the guitar accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are: 'peace. Praise from his child-ren who from their birth are wel come to'. The third staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are: 'share in his feast. 1. The wed - ding was fun, un - til no more wine,'. The fourth staff is the guitar accompaniment, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are: 'bott - les lay on the ground. Jes - us said, 'Fill them with wa - ter and'. The fifth staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are: 'taste.' Shar - ing to - geth - er he's found.

Praise to the God of all the earth, share in his grace and

peace. Praise from his child-ren who from their birth are wel come to

share in his feast. 1. The wed - ding was fun, un - til no more wine,

bott - les lay on the ground. Jes - us said, 'Fill them with wa - ter and

taste.' Shar - ing to - geth - er he's found.

*Chorus Praise to the God of all the earth,  
share in his grace and peace.  
Praise from his children who from their birth  
are welcome to share in his feast.*

1. The wedding was fun, until no more wine,  
bottles lay on the ground.  
Jesus said, 'Fill them with water, and taste.'  
Sharing together he's found.  
*Praise to the God...*

2. A boy gave his lunch: five loaves and two fish,  
wasn't a lot to go round.  
Jesus said, 'Thank you', and blessed what he had.  
Sharing together he's found.  
*Praise to the God...*

3. Breaking the bread with all of his friends,  
passing the wine around,  
Jesus said, 'Do this and remember me'.  
Sharing together he's found.  
*Praise to the God...*

Example XY graph



Events

Happiness

Big crowds still follow him

Jesus goes off alone

# Pearl Diving

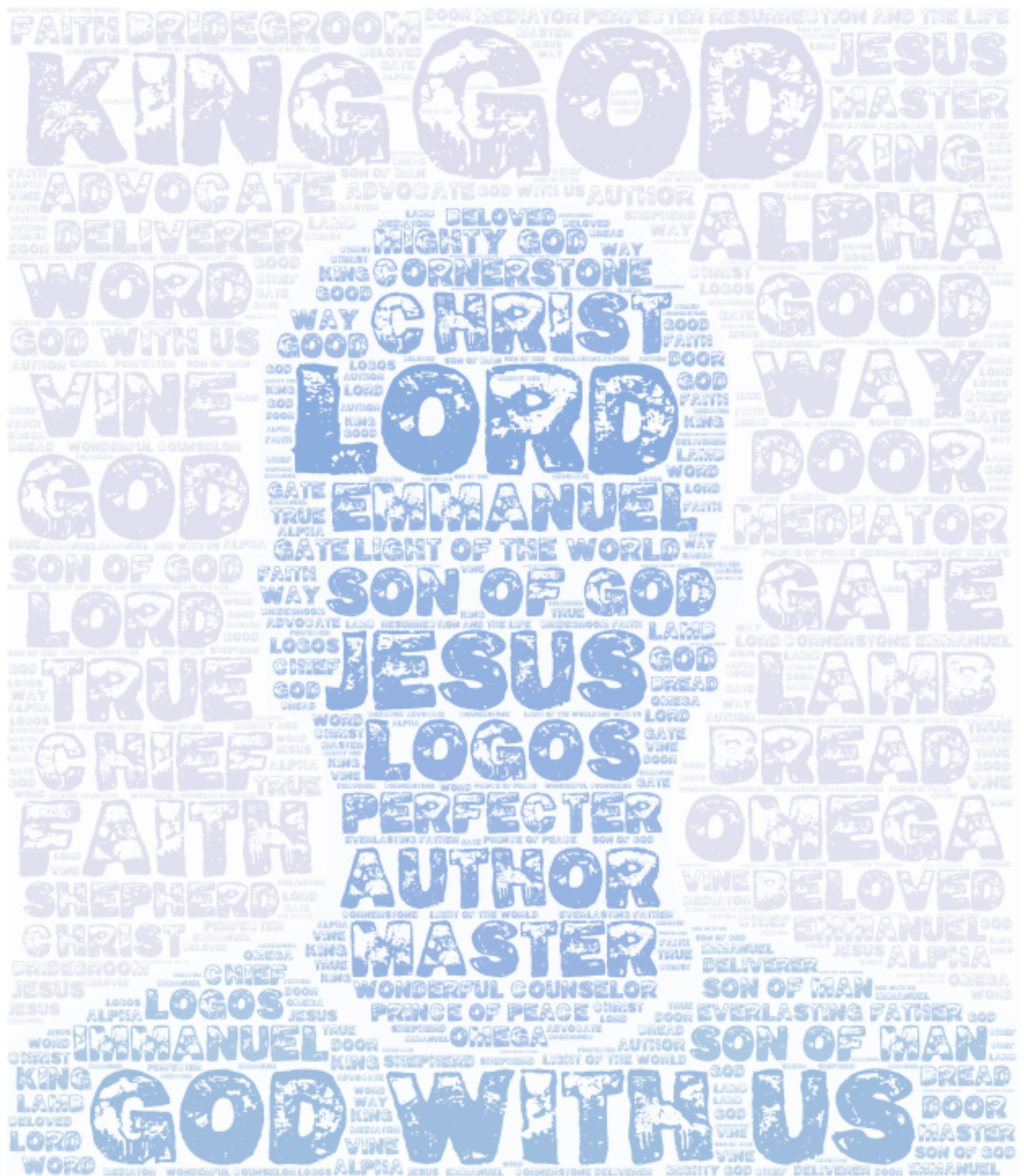
Wait until you are told to uncover the grid below and then try to find the 'pearl'.

The first person to find it wins!

t	w	l	f	h	f	j	i	l	q	k	g	y	k	n	m	s	j	w	g
h	e	o	n	p	u	v	s	j	q	p	d	a	s	m	g	z	r	p	l
m	v	r	q	u	i	v	u	l	i	r	l	a	z	y	a	t	x	w	y
a	k	p	y	m	e	u	m	o	g	k	l	b	g	a	b	r	q	t	e
r	i	i	o	m	p	s	m	p	z	l	r	y	x	f	s	k	m	p	n
x	v	c	d	c	z	p	s	x	c	e	n	n	y	c	d	l	e	c	d
k	s	h	x	w	g	l	a	o	z	p	b	l	f	p	t	p	h	i	i
r	t	e	s	j	s	g	d	f	i	s	k	k	c	l	k	o	p	q	a
g	q	f	z	h	p	d	w	s	c	v	g	x	r	c	e	q	r	z	w
p	h	q	l	l	l	w	w	f	z	m	s	z	s	f	l	r	o	k	m
h	v	l	d	g	n	l	o	m	z	f	c	i	q	n	x	n	x	l	k
n	p	b	l	s	r	t	c	p	a	r	b	g	s	d	p	y	k	w	r
n	g	y	w	t	i	u	b	t	l	e	h	q	b	i	f	e	p	q	e
j	l	c	f	x	i	p	y	l	p	w	d	n	y	b	j	m	d	o	x
z	d	p	g	b	v	a	k	u	p	f	u	o	b	p	z	q	t	j	s
y	f	n	x	r	j	l	m	e	u	t	p	k	a	t	i	r	z	q	d
u	e	d	a	o	c	m	a	p	x	l	y	d	h	o	q	l	z	d	h
a	v	q	a	z	v	r	x	w	j	o	f	x	k	l	q	s	y	o	t
z	g	a	j	d	l	l	g	o	i	n	m	o	j	m	r	e	g	w	c
f	y	t	u	h	p	l	u	s	a	k	s	u	t	t	r	o	z	x	n







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