



Aim:

To explore different ways of praying.

Introduction:

Do you ever find it difficult to know what to say? Ever lost without words? In any relationship it can be difficult to communicate what you feel and what you want to say. This is the same in our relationship with God. These activities look at ways that can help the children in your group begin to pray and get to know God better. It's something that we should be doing together with the children every week, but sometimes it's hard to think of ways that we can do it that don't get stale. Try using some a variety of these activities on a regular basis.

These activities focus on using prayer in praise, thanks, worship, and petition (asking God to do something).

Key Bible Verses:

Psalm 141:2; Matthew 6:5-15; Luke 11:1-12; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17;

Activity 1 What Is Prayer?

Aim:

To use bubbles to demonstrate that when we pray we are sending a message to God.

Equipment:

- 1 part washing up liquid / 150ml
- 4 parts glycerine or light corn syrup / 2 Tsp sugar
- 10 parts water / 350ml
- Measuring jug
- Garden wire
- Towels
- Bottles

Preparation:

Make some of the bubble mixture beforehand, as it will work better if it is left overnight.

Instructions:

- This activity uses bubbles to demonstrate communicating with God in heaven. Ask the group if anyone has ever prayed for anything and where they did it? Explain that we can talk to God at any time, and it is a bit like blowing bubbles. Ask if anyone likes blowing bubbles. Read Psalm 141:2 you may like to substitute the word incense to bubbles. Say that just as we love bubbles, God loves it when we send prayers up to him. He enjoys it when we talk to him, just like we enjoy blowing bubbles.

Making the Bubble Solution

- Step 1: Pour the water into a measuring jug.
- Step 2: Add 2 teaspoons of sugar, and mix until the water is dissolved.
- Step 3: Add the washing up liquid.
- Step 4: Mix together creating the minimum amount of froth. Remove any froth created.
- Step 5: Pour into bottles using a funnel. Tilt slightly to avoid frothing. The liquid is useable straightaway, but works better if you leave the liquid overnight.



10 minutes



No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Psalm 141 : 2

Making a Wand

- There are several ways that you can go about for making a wand to blow your bubbles:
 - **Hand wand** - dip your hands in the bubble solution and press your thumb and index finger together to make a circle. Blow gently through the circle and you will get bubbles. It takes a little practice.
 - **Garden wire** – loop some garden wire into the shape of a bubble wand. Make sure that you include a handle.
- Now you can begin to blow some bubbles. You could have contests for the largest bubble, the number of bubbles, the bubble that doesn't pop for the longest time, or the bubble that floats the highest.

Bubble Prayers

Gather the group in a circle and give the group an opportunity to pray for different things. They may be prayers of praise, forgiveness, or asking God to do something. After each person has said a prayer, allow them to blow a bubble.

Tips/Advice:

If you prepare the bubble solution in advance give opportunity for the children to create their own and take it home.

Extension Tasks/ Adaptations:

Making a Bubble Wall

- Make enough bubble mixture to cover the floor of a paddling pool.
- Place a hula hoop in the mixture and cover.
- Slowly raise the hoop and you will create a wall of bubbles..
- Now ask for a brave volunteer to take off their shoes and step into the swimming pool and into the centre of the hula hoop. Give them some goggles or sunglasses.
- Now, very slowly, and with a steady hand, pull the hula hoop straight up to the top of your volunteer's head to place them inside a human-sized bubble.
- Pop the balloon and release them.



Activity 2 Prayer Activities

Aim:

To prompt children to pray about what is on their heart.

Equipment:

- Paper
- Paint
- Spoons
- Coloured wool
- Balloons
- Colouring pens/pencils

Preparation:

Balloon Burst – Inflate the balloons before the activity begins.

Instructions:

Ask the children if they ever struggle to know what to pray for or how to do it. Tell them that in Philippians 4:6 we are told to ask God for what we need with a thankful heart. This is a great place to start. Pray by saying thanks and asking God for what we need. Simple really! The following activities provide great ideas to put this into practice:

Alphabet Prayers

Sit the children in a circle and start by praying for something beginning with the letter 'A', then ask each child, in turn, to pray for something beginning with the next letter of the alphabet. This can be used for prayers of thanks or prayers for others.

If I Were

Get the children to draw something that they would really like to be. On the back of the piece of paper assist the children to write a short prayer using the following formula, "If I were a _____, I'd thank God for _____; but I want to thank God for my _____."

e.g. "If I were a ladybird, I'd thank God for my spots; but I want to thank God for my parents."

Hand Prints

Prepare large sheets of paper and coloured paints. Each person places a print on the paper, then encourage the group to pray for individuals and concerns as you move around the sheet. After the paint is dry, you could place another layer of hand prints.

Echo Prayer

Pray a line of a prayer out loud. Pause and ask the children to repeat that phrase.

Spoons

The letters of SPOON can be used as a framework for prayer:

- S - saying sorry
- P - praise
- O - others
- O - ourselves
- N - needs

Give each child a spoon at the beginning of the activity and guide them through saying a SPOON prayer.

Prayer Plaits

Cut three equal lengths of wool (30 cm) in three colours of the child's choice. Explain that one colour represents God, one yourself and one other people. Knot them together at one end, and begin plaiting.



5-10 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Matthew 6:5-15;
Luke 11:1-12;
Philippians 4:6

As you plait the wool use this as an opportunity to reflect on what the three different coloured pieces of string represent. When the plait is complete tie another knot. Using the excess string at both ends tie the band around the children's wrists.

Balloon Burst

Place some prayer points or short simple prayers inside some balloons. Inflate the balloons and place them around a room. You may like to include some empty balloons. Invite the children to run around and stamp on the balloon and collect the notes. When all the balloons are burst ensure that the cards are fairly distributed, and invite the children to say short prayers, e.g. Dear God thank you for my family. Amen

Map Prayer

If there is a part of the world that you would like your group to pray for, why not get out a map show where it is and explain the situation. Invite short prayers to be said by the children.

Extension Tasks/ Adaptations:

Sometimes it is really hard to know what to pray for. The Bible gives us the Lord's Prayer for such situations which provides a great way to pray.

Our Father in Heaven

Your name is holy

Your Kingdom come

Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven

Give us today the food we need

Forgive us the wrong things that we have done as we forgive wrongs others have done to us

Do not lead us into temptation but keep us safe from evil

For Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, For ever and ever.

Write several phrases from the prayer above onto pieces of card and see if the children can place them in the right order. Use the version familiar to you.

Take each line of the prayer and focus on it for that week's prayer time.



Activity 3 Prayer Bear

Aim:

To encourage children to bring their concerns to God through prayer.

Equipment:

- Large paper plate
- Small paper plate
- Paper bowl
- Black pom-pom
- Large stick on eyes
- Black marker pen
- Scissors
- Paint
- Glue
- Sellotape
- Prayer Bear template
- Card

Preparation:

You may like to create the bear in advance or part of a longer activity with the group.

Instructions:

The Prayer Bear is a great way to engage children in the group. When it is made it can be stuck up on a wall, and children can post their prayer requests into its tummy. At the end of each evening you can pull them out and say a prayer for whatever is on the card.

Below are the instructions on how to make the Prayer Bear:

- Place a small paper plate on a work surface, and stick a paper bowl face down on top of it leaving at least 5cm of the plate still showing.
- Cut out the ears from the Prayer Bear template and stick under the small plate so that the majority of the ear is showing.
- Add the nose by getting a paper cup and cut down from the opening 2-3 cm from the base of the cup. Cut around the circumference of the cup at this height, and then stick onto the middle of the underside of the bowl.
- Now move onto the Prayer Bear's body. Cut out the arms and legs from the template. Stick the legs to a large paper plate that is face up, by sticking to the underside of the plate so that they are overlapping on the reverse of the body.
- Stick the arms by folding around the edge of the body and sticking to the underside.
- Cut a 2 cm wide slit in the top of the bear's tummy that is long enough to post through prayer notes.
- Cut off one side and the top off a small tissue box.
- Stick the open side of the box to the back of the bear so that when prayer notes are posted through they will land in the box. It is important that the top of the box is open so that you can get the notes out again.
- Now stick the head and body sections so that they are slightly overlapping.
- Stick on the eyes, add a black pom pom on the cup for the nose.
- Paint the bear, and then add any details (e.g. mouth, toes, fingers etc.) using black paint or a marker pen.

Give the children opportunities to post their prayers into the prayer bear, and then use them as prompts to pray. Finish with this prayer:



5-45 minutes



No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Ensure adequate supervision when using scissors and glue.



10-30 minutes



No maximum number
depending on
adequate supervision.

Dear God,
We thank you God for the chance to meet,
To gather around and take a seat.
We prayed out loud from the Prayer Bear's tum,
And now give thanks for the gift of your Son.
Help us know that you're always there
Never too busy always time to spare,
And as we leave this BB night
Help us always to keep you in sight.
Amen.

Tips/Advice:

Devise your own actions for the prayer.

Activity 4 Where's God When I'm S-Scared

Aim:

To teach us how to handle fear.

Equipment:

- DVD player
- TV/Projector
- Where's God when I'm S-Scared? (VeggieTales DVD)

Preparation:

Watch the DVD before the session and see if you want to show the whole thing or just a clip.

Instructions:

- Ask the children if they ever get scared.
- Show them the "Where's God when I'm Scared?" VeggieTales DVD.
- When it is finished tell them that when we are scared the best thing to do is to pray and God promises to always be with us.
- Pray that God will help us with our fear.

Finish by singing "God is Bigger than the Bogeyman" along to the DVD.



Activity 3 Creation Sundae

Aim:

To make a sundae on the basis of the creation story.

Equipment:

- Bowl
- Ingredients
- Spoons

Preparation:

Have all you need to hand. Have wet wipes and a cloth – make sure that the children are either wearing aprons or carefully watched so that they do not get covered in cream.

Instructions:

- **Day 1 Day and Night**
Start off with an empty bowl or ice cream sundae glass. Ask the children to tell you what God created on the first day. For the day add squirty cream or ice cream. For the night, add chocolate crushed biscuits or chocolate chips.
- **Day 2 Sky**
Ask the children what God created on the second day
For the sky add marshmallows
- **Day 3 Earth/Sea/Plants**
Ask the children what God created on the third day.
Add green sweets and blue Smarties to represent the earth or sea.
- **Day 4 Sun/Moon/Stars**
Ask the children what God created on the fourth day.
You can add sprinkle stars, white chocolate chips, or other sweets or that look like the sun and moon..
- **Day 5 Fish/Birds**
Ask the children what God created on the fifth day
Add fizzy fish or birds
- **Day 6 Animals/Man and Woman**
Ask the children what God created on the sixth day
Add animal biscuits and 2 jelly babies for the man and woman.
- **Day 7 Rest**
Ask the children what God created on the seventh day.
Nothing.

Then talk about how God rested on the seventh day and said, "It is very good." Then look at the Sundae and ask the children what they think of it and ask if they would like to share it with you.

Tips/Advice:

- It may help to make more than one – break into smaller groups with different leaders.
- Any of the ideas can be substituted and different ingredients can be used.



20 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Be careful of any food allergies.





Aim:

To teach the children about being sorry/forgiveness

Introduction:

This topic looks at the concept of forgiveness and being sorry. In Jeremiah 31:34 God says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." God never fails to offer His forgiveness to His children when they come to Him and are sorry. God is faithful. He is the example that we should follow and show forgiveness to others.

Activity 1 The Lord's Prayer

Aim:

To understand the Lord's prayer and why we need to ask for forgiveness and forgive others. This is also a great opportunity to get the children to memorize the prayer. Luke 11:1-4

Equipment:

Bible

Preparation:

Read Luke 11

Instructions:

In Luke the disciples ask Jesus 'How should we pray?' Jesus answers by saying, 'When you pray, say'

So we have direction from Jesus. Part of the Lord's prayer is about saying sorry to others and accepting others when they say sorry to us. We want the children to understand that God forgives us when we say we're sorry and He also wants us to forgive others when they say sorry to us.

Do we remember to say sorry when we've done something wrong? Do we say sorry to God?

The Lord's Prayer is a prayer that children can learn at a young age. It is important to teach the Lord's Prayer to children in a meaningful way, so that children's prayer is more than reciting words.

Jesus begins The Lord's Prayer by speaking to God who is the Father of all people – the people we like and those we don't like; people who look like us and people that don't look like us; people who believe in God and people who don't believe in Him.

'Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us'. We all make mistakes and we sometimes hurt people's feelings and do things that we shouldn't, Jesus names these things as sins. Doing things that make God unhappy, and that go against what He tells us what is right to do, means that we need to say sorry – we need to ask for forgiveness. This means that we can see that we have done wrong and we can ask God if we can straighten up that wrong. If you forgive other people, then they are more likely to forgive you. It is wrong to stay upset with someone. It doesn't feel good to be upset does it?



10 minutes



4+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Luke 11

Can you think of a time when you needed to say sorry to someone?
 Can you think of a time when someone said sorry to you?
 How did that make you feel?

Let's pray together and say the Lord's prayer.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

It may be useful to start teaching at this age that Amen means that I agree, that what has been said is the truth – so that when they say Amen it is not just a word that they do not understand but a word that they can say with enthusiasm and energy.



10 minutes



4+ No maximum
 number depending
 on adequate
 supervision.



Keep all the cleaning
 materials away from
 the children and you
 may want to wear
 gloves yourself.

Activity 2 Shining As God Intended!!

Aim:

To think about how God cleans us when we say sorry and how he works from inside us, from our hearts.

Equipment:

- Dirty silver or brass object
- Clean silver or brass object
- Cleaner – silver or brass polish
- Cloth
- Gloves

Preparation:

Have one of the objects cleaned and shining and put that away hidden. Prepare a table with the cleaner, cloth and dirty object.

Instructions:

Ask the children what they do when they get really dirty in the garden or when they have come back from a walk with their family or when they come back from football or rugby practice.

They have to get clean. So they might have a bath or a shower, they would wash their hands and face and then that would wash off all the dirt.

Well I have something that is really dirty here. You can't really tell that it is dirty because you don't know what it is supposed to look like. Well the Bible says that we are a little bit like this. God intended for us to be with Him and to live together in harmony – where we do not do things that hurt each other, where we do not get cross or angry, where there is no pain or hurt. But something happened that stopped that.

Does anyone know what happened?

Well, Adam and Eve did something that God told them not to do. They ate an apple from the tree that God had said, Do not eat from this tree. Then something called sin came into the world. That means when we do what we want even though we know that God has told us not to do these things.

God has told us what we are supposed to be like and how we are supposed to behave in the Bible. And He tells us that if we are truly sorry for the bad things that we have done, for the sin that we have committed and we love Jesus then He will forgive us.



So what do we have to do so that God will forgive us?

We must trust in Jesus, because he died on the cross so that God could forgive our sins, and say sorry. When we say sorry, (take some of the cleaner and put it on the cloth and then rub the brass or silver and it will be shining like new) God forgives us and we become clean again and shiny to other people.

But each day this will get dirty again just like we do and so we need to pray to God everyday and say sorry for all the wrong things that we do and thank you for all that He gives us each day.

That way we will really get to know God and he will listen to us as we pray to Him.

Let's Pray:

Dear God,
Thank you that you can make us clean
and forgive us our sin, through Jesus,
when we say sorry to you.
Help us to be shiny to other people.
Amen

Activity 3 Canyon Crossing

Aim:

To get the children to understand the power of the cross and how Jesus bridges the gap between God and us.

Equipment:

- Masking tape
- Cardboard or paper cross that reaches from one side to the other.

Preparation:

Tape two lines creating a wide space on the floor – creating a un-passable, un-jumpable space that needs to be crossed.

Instructions:

- Start the session with all the children on one side of the canyon.
- Then ask the children if anyone can jump or make their way across the gap using their own strength.
- Give the children a good chance to get across – this may be safer if you get them to have a go one at a time.
- When they have exhausted their ideas say you actually have an amazing way that they can get across.
- Tell them that on the other side of the canyon is God and that they have shown you that by using their own strength they are unable to get to Him.
- Why is it that we cannot get to God in our own strength?
- Because we are sinful. What does sinful mean? It means that we have done things that make God unhappy with us and mean that because God is perfect and Holy, we cannot have a relationship with Him.
- Can you think of things you have done that are sins?
- So our sins are stopping up from getting to God and having a relationship with Him, stopping us spending time with Him and having a future together.
- Does anyone have any idea what we can do to get across this gap to be with God?
- Nothing!!!!



10 minutes



**2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision**

- But there is someone who has done everything that needs to be done for us to be with God in a relationship with our heavenly Father.
- Any guesses?
- Yes Jesus!!! Jesus has done all that needs to be done for us to be in right relationship with God. Jesus went to die on the cross in our place. He was sinless but so that we could have a relationship with God and be His children Jesus took our place, a place we deserved and died in our place.
- Wow – so that if we trust in Jesus and we say sorry for all of our sins we can join God on the other side of this Canyon.
- So if we lay down this cross,(open up and lay down the paper cross) it will fill the gap between our side and God and because of what Jesus did, not what we have done we can cross over and be with God.
- Let all the children cross over the cross and get to the other side.

Let's say a prayer of thanks:

Dear God,

Thank you so much that Jesus died
for our sins so that we can be in
relationship with You!!

Amen

Tips/Advice:

Make this whole session dynamic – talk as the children cross and pray with them once they are standing on the other side

**Aim:**

Looking at what friendship means.

Introduction:

Friendship is an important lesson for children. Part of being a Christian or being part of a BB group is learning how to “love other people” The children may not have the attention span for long talks so this element is based on crafts, storytelling, games and community helping to teach the importance of friendship.

Activity 1 My Best Friends

Aim:

To think about being best friends with Jesus.

Instructions:

Do you have a best friend – what is it that makes them so special to you? *Let the children talk and share their feelings*

Did you know that Jesus wants to be our Best Friend? Friendship is what Jesus wants most of all.

What makes someone a good friend? *Let the children answer your question.*

A friend accepts you just the way you are, believes in you and encourages you. Someone who is trustworthy, who does not let you down, who forgives your mistakes, and enjoys being with you and makes you laugh. *Add any others the children have suggested*

Jesus wants to be our friend in this way. He is not a far away God. He wants us to spend time with Him. He wants to be your very best friend, and He wants you to be His best friend! Jesus is the best of everything we look for in a friend.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was “cool”. Lots of people wanted to be around Jesus and to hang out with Him. They wanted to be His friend. Jesus told His disciples, his friends - that He wants to be our friend.

I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. (John 15:15)

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

Tell the story of Peter's friendship with Jesus. You can add this extra part if you want to expand the story and talk about Jesus Friends - Peter.

Jesus in His friendship towards us forgives our mistakes. Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends and disciples. Peter knew that Jesus was The Son of God, Peter walked on the water with Jesus. Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him and say that he was not His friend. But Peter would not believe Jesus and said that he would never deny being a friend of Jesus. But on the night Jesus was arrested Peter did deny being a friend of Jesus – he denied it three times – just as Jesus had said he would.



20 minutes



4+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



John 15: 15

After Jesus had been arrested Peter went to sit near to where he Jesus had been taken. He sat far enough away so nobody could see him. He was very afraid and when a woman asked if he was a friend of Jesus he lied and said no because he was scared. Later someone else asked if he was a friend of Jesus, but again Peter said no. The third time Peter said he was not a friend of Jesus, a rooster (like a male chicken) crowed. Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him.

Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept. Mark 14:72 (NIV)

We need friends, don't we? Jesus needed friends, too! But they all ran away. And Peter, one of his closest friends said he wasn't His friend when he was in trouble. Peter felt so bad about what he did that he wept – which means that he cried and cried.

But the amazing thing about this story is that Jesus forgave Peter. Because he was forgiven Peter came to love Jesus even more. Peter spent all the rest of his life telling people about Jesus and what a wonderful friend he could be to each of them.

Jesus will forgive you all of your mistakes and still want to be your friend if you trust in Him. He loves you and wants to be friends.



20 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Ecclesiastes 4: 12



Ensure adequate supervision when using scissors.

Activity 2 Friendship Bracelets

Equipment:

- String,
- Leather
- Coloured thread x 3 colours – including purple
- Scissors

Preparation:

Lay out equipment – try it first to ensure that you know what you are doing.

Instructions:

To make friendship bracelets, you need lengths of string, yarn or leather strips in three different colours. One colour represents you, another represents your friend and the third colour, usually purple, represents God.

- Cut equal lengths of the string and lay them side by side on a table.
- ~~Let the children work in pairs – get one child to hold one end of the string while the other~~ plaits and weaves the three colours together.
- The order of plaiting should be the left string over the right, then the right string over the left.
- The colours will weave together as you plait.
- If the children have done this before and want to do something more creative – then let them show you new ways to do it.
- When you get to the right length for a bracelet, check wrist size - tie the ends together on to the child's wrist.
- Then swap places and the other child can hold the end whilst the second child plaits.

Get the children to listen once they have each made a bracelet.

And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart. Ecclesiastes 4:12 (NIV)



Let's talk about the strength of good friends. While each of us has our own strengths and weaknesses, it's comforting to know that we can all lean on each other during times of need. As friends, we all learn to help each other and provide support to others that may need comfort at a particular time or during a particular situation.

The same is true with our family of friends here at BB. We're all part of the body of Christ and, just like with our earthly families, we should all remember that when one of us is hurt, we're all hurt. When one of us is down, we're all down. But, as family and as Christians, each of us is created by God and known by Him.

Here in this bracelet we have plaited ourselves, our friends and God into an unbreakable bond, a cord of three stands that can't easily be broken.

Tips/Advice:

Encourage the children to work together – make sure that they all complete a bracelet.

Activity 3 Friendship

Aim:

To work in pairs or three's depending on numbers.

Equipment:

- Pens/Pencils
- Colouring Pens/Pencils
- Paint
- Paper cut outs of two's and three's

Preparation:

Cut out paper doll shapes in two's and three's – mainly two's – have a few three's so that nobody feels left out.

Instructions:

- Cut out a shape (like paper dolls) of two friends holding hands.
- The children can then chose a friend to work with and they each can work on colouring in one of the friends.
- Get them to write their names on the front and these can then be hung on the wall or on a bulletin board with the title "We are friends".
- Let a group of three work together if there is an uneven number and either have a few threes prepared or just tape an extra friend onto the other two.
- Some children may want to do this activity twice choosing a different friend each time.
- Depending on how long you have to do this activity you can give them this opportunity.

Tips/Advice:

Just make sure that no child feels left out and if this might happen plan for it and ask the children to work in groups of three.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

You could stick all the friends together to make a paper chain showing that all the children are friends at BB.



15 minutes



3+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



15 minutes



3+ No maximum
number depending
on adequate
supervision.

Activity 4

Canvas Hand Friendship Print

Aim:

To create a piece of work that can be hung in the church and that represents friendship and love.

Equipment:

- Large canvas
- Paint
- Washing facilities
- Disposable Aprons

Instructions:

The idea of this is to create something that the children can see when they come into the church and know that they have had a part in making it. It is also good for the church to be reminded that the children are creative and a big part of the church.

- Get many different colours of paint and place it onto a plate or bowl in which they can put their hand in. Otherwise you can paint their hands with a paint brush.
- Then in turn, they can each put their hand print onto the canvas making a heart shape or a tree shape.
- It may be useful to mark with pencil the outline of the shape so that you can keep the shape as each child adds their hand print.

Tips/Advice:

Have plenty of adults helping so that each child only puts their hand onto the canvas once each time. It may be useful to give them some paper to try it out so that they can see how it works and this will minimise mistakes on the final print.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

Add a Bible verse under the print such as

John 13:34 *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."*



Aim:

To learn the Biblical principle of Spiritual Fitness.

Introduction:

The New Testament uses the idea of training as a tool for growth in the spiritual life. The importance of discipline, perseverance and commitment in the spiritual journey is clear. There is a difference between physical and spiritual fitness. Physical fitness has a number of motivations and spiritual fitness is motivated by God-centredness. This topic aims to get children to see that they need to flex their faith muscles to get stronger and grow in their Christian faith.

Activity 1 Fit For Jesus

Aim:

To teach the children that we need to develop physical and spiritual fitness.

Preparation:

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-25

'Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.' (NIV)

Instructions:

- Ask the children to rate out of 10 how fit some people are, e.g. Mum, Dad, BB Leader, themselves, grandparents, Chaplain, Rory McIlroy, Steven Gerrard, David Beckham. Choose sports personalities that the children will know.
- Put their names on a flip chart pad and invite individuals to come forward and write their answer next to the name.
- Now ask them to act out different ways they stay fit in front of the group, e.g. football, walking.
- As soon as one person guesses the correct answer get someone else to come forward and act something else out. Carry on until they're out of ideas.

Tell them that being a Christian is a bit like being an athlete like David Beckham and we need to train to become and stay fit. Ask them if anyone knows how a Christian might train?

Introduce the idea that by coming to BB and learning about Jesus, praying to God and talking to Him, reading the Bible – God's word, that we are all actually training for life. Just as we need to be physically fit we also need to be spiritually fit.

Tell them that we are all training for a prize, and that's God's gift of Heaven. Tell them that if they want to learn more about this that they too can train, by praying, reading their Bible, and learning from others.

With football players their training helps them to play well and win games while they are young enough to play football but our spiritual training will be for an everlasting prize that will mean that we get to live with God and Jesus in heaven.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

You may like to have some age appropriate Bible stories and prayer books for the children to take home. These are available from Scripture Union (www.scriptureunion.org.uk) and The Book of Hope from UCB (www.ucb.co.uk).



20 minutes



3+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Corinthians
9: 24 - 25



20 minutes



3+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



1 Timothy
4: 7-8

Activity 2 Yourself To Be Godly

Aim:

To get children to think about training themselves to be Godly.

Equipment:

Bibles

Instructions:

Last year I bought myself a beautiful new bicycle. I was so excited and knew it was the perfect way to get fit and travel to work. I cycled almost every day, driving my blue bike. I began to feel better too and started to get fitter, less puffing as I went up the big hills. Before long, however, something surprising happened to my love of cycling.

I let other things take my mind away from my bike rides. One day it was raining and I did not want to get wet and the next it was really freezing cold. Then another day I had a film to go to see and another day I had a dentist appointment. Unfortunately, the excitement of having a brand new shiny bike had worn off.

Sadly, many Christians have the same problem with their faith. When we are new Christians, everything about our life with Christ is very exciting; we read our bibles all the time but as time goes by, everyday things cause us to lose our interest and excitement.

Paul's letter to Timothy talks about the challenge all Christians will face.

"Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value but godliness has value for all things holding promise for both the present life and the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:7-8).

Coming to BB and going to Sunday school will give you bible teaching which will strengthen your faith and make each one of us fit to be servants for Jesus.

Most of us have seen great athletes running or playing. We watch excited as they score goals, catch incredible passes, or race past finish line. They make it look really easy but we know that they have to use both their natural ability and a lot of discipline and training in order to win.

Most of us don't have natural athletic skill, but both physical and spiritual fitness require a lot of discipline, determination and commitment.

An athlete won't become a champion by exercising on only one day each week, he has to commit all of his energy into achieving the goal.

God is not bothered with our age or fitness, He looks beyond what we see. God's power to change us is endless. He has a wonderful plan to use each one of His children to bring Him honour and glory.

Don't put your faith in Jesus away in the garage like I put my new bike away because it will go rusty, the tyres will go down and eventually it will stop working.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

You can physical exercises to compliment the teaching – see how many push ups or sit ups the children can do. Get them to hop on one leg and to do star jumps – then when they are tired show them that they need refreshment. Give them water but make the point that we need to get God's living water from His Word all the time otherwise we will dry up.



15 minutes



5+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Hebrews 12: 1-2



Space the children out as they run the race.

Activity 3 Run The Race

Aim:

To understand the Christian life.

Equipment:

Masking Tape

Preparation:

- Read Hebrews 12:1-2
'And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.'(NIV)
- Use masking tape or similar to set out your start line and finish line.

Instructions:

Today we are looking at how "the Race" is run at BB, as we seek to be a team that runs together. When we run a race, we need to know when to stop don't we.....when do we stop?.....when we cross the finish line! We don't stop half-way, or when we get tired or when other runners get ahead of us do we? No, we finish the race.

Just as the runners in a race keep their eyes and mind on the finish line, we must keep our eyes on Jesus as we each go through life.

God has a special race for you to run! What an exciting thought—God has given me a race to run too. God has designed a special purpose for my life and for your life, a purpose that you and I can discover through talking with God and a purpose that we can complete – just like our race. What is this race?

This race begins, not when you are born, but when you ask Jesus to come into your heart and when you accept His gift of forgiveness.

Now we are going to run a special race. The winner is going to be the last person over the finish line as we are running a slow motion race. So each of us starts at the start line and we need to think about how our body moves and how our arms move and our legs move and think how we push forward towards the finish line.

We are going to have to try very hard to go as slow as possible but we cannot stop. Think of each of your muscles working very hard in your body, of how your breathing becomes faster as you put so much effort into the race.

Run the race – encourage the children to run slowly

Did you notice that you kept your eyes on the finish line – just like in the passage we looked at how the Bible tells us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus so that we can finish the race we have to run in life.

Did we all persevere? That is what God wants us to do in our lives.

'And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.'

**Tips/Advice:**

Talk to the children as they run – say things like -

- Feel how your muscles move as you run
- Keep persevering
- Push your body forward as you get near the finish line
- Are you working your arms as well like a runner does

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

Encourage them to be the last one over the line.



Aim:

For the children to be familiar with the story of Noah and its main messages.

Introduction:

The activities below work well together in that particular order, although all activities can also be done individually or in different contexts.

The story of Noah can be found in Genesis 6: 9 - 22

Biblical background:

One of the challenges of this story is to reconcile the two sides of God displayed in it. God who kills almost all of mankind as a consequence of their sin and God who saves animals and makes an eternal promise to people as a sign of his love for them. It needs to be seen in the wider context of the Bible. It follows the stories of creation, the first sin (the fall) and the brother murder of Cain and Abel. This context explains something about God's choice to send the flood. He created the world and all 'was good' but already there he hints at the fact that mankind would need rescuing from sin (Genesis 3:15b) showing both his anger over sin (hence the flood) and his desire to rescue mankind (hence the promise of the rainbow).

This story also encourages the children to love God and follow his laws– just like Noah did. It also talks about how this can lead to becoming an outsider, as Noah was the only one in the world who was faithful to God (Genesis 6:8).

The story closes with the encouraging 'rainbow promise' (God will never flood the earth again), reminding the children that God keeps His promises and loves them immensely as 'children of God'. The challenge is to live like Noah did – loving God and trusting Him.

Historical Background:

Ancient stories of great floods are known worldwide. There are several versions of the story of a great flood in the area of Mesopotamia, and archaeologists have found copies of a story from 1650 BC which tells a story very much like the biblical one (although this is about the creator God 'Enki' and his follower 'Atrhasis').

In Genesis 8:4 it tells us that the boat came to a halt on the mountains of 'Ararat'. This is in modern day Turkey.



Genesis
6: 9 - 22





5 minutes



No maximum number
depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 1 Make A Noise

Aim:

- To practise making animal sounds (to be used later when telling the story)
- As a warm up activity

Instructions:

Decide on a number of animal noises (that are reasonably easy to make). Get the children into a circle and go around the group whispering the name of one of the animals into their ear. You need to say each animal name repeatedly e.g. twice for smaller groups, four or five times for larger groups.

When the game starts the children have to find all the other animals in their 'herd' – by walking around the room making the noise of their animal. When they are sure they have a full herd they are to sit down together. The winners are the first group to sit down AND be sure they aren't missing one of their herd.

When a group sits down, check that they are complete. Wait with announcing them as winners until all herds have found their animals.

Tips/Advice:

The benefits of this activity as an introduction are twofold:

- The children practise the animal sounds for the story
- You can start your story with everyone sat down and ready

Activity 2 Tell The Story

Aim:

- To learn about Noah and the ark
- To listen out for key words and respond

Equipment:

Maracas or similar percussion instruments to simulate rain.

Instructions:

Tell the story below. In order to help the children to concentrate and to keep them involved, tell them that they have to listen out for certain words and make the following noises/shout out words every time they hear the word. Practise this a few times by saying the word, until you get the correct response every time. If you think the children might find this too tricky, split the group into four, with every group just listening out for one key word and responding accordingly. The words are (you can of course come up with others).

Key Word	Response
Noah	Shout: "What a good man!"
Rain/rained	Shake the maracas
Animals	Make their herd noises from earlier game
Ark	Shout "Ahoy there!"

**Then tell the story:**

"God had made the earth and all **animals** and people in it. He thought that everything was beautiful and loved his creation very much. But the people on earth forgot about God altogether and they started doing very bad things. God saw what a terrible place the world had become. He saw that everyone was lying, and cheating, and killing. But..... God saw one good man. His name was **Noah**. **Noah** still cared about God. He listened to God, and he always tried to do what God said. And God was pleased with **Noah**. God said to him, "**Noah**, I have decided to put an end to this mess people have made of my world, and start all over. I have a plan. And for this I want you to build a boat." It was going to be a very BIG boat. It was going to be longer than a football field, and higher than a three storey house. God called the boat an "**ark**."

Now, **Noah** might have thought, "This job is too big, and I am too old!" But he had God, and with God on your side, anything is possible. So **Noah** went right to work. He did everything just as God had told him to. **Noah** kept on working, and then one day the **ark** was finished. Then God said, "Now I want you to find two of every kind of **animal**, a male and a female, and bring them into the **ark**. And bring enough food for them all too." Think about what a noise all these **animals** must have made and what a mess! (It must have smelled pretty bad too...) "Now it's time for you and your family to get into the **ark**!" The Lord said to **Noah**. So he and his wife, and his three sons and their wives; all got into the big boat. Then the sky turned grey and then the **rain** came, lots and lots of **rain**. It **rained**. And **rained**. And **rained**. There was so much **rain** that it covered the whole earth and the **ark** began to float. It **rained** for forty days and forty nights. But God hadn't forgotten about them.

One day the **rain** stopped, and the water began to go down. It was another 150 days before the **ark** came to rest on the very top of a mountain. Finally, God told **Noah** it was all right to leave the **ark**. He opened the door, and all those **animals** rushed out! God had saved them!

Noah was so thankful to God that he had saved all the **animals** and his family that he went to find lots of rocks. With those rocks he built an altar, which is a kind of table for God. God was very pleased that **Noah** went to all this effort to show that he was truly thankful.

And so God made this promise: "Never again will I destroy the world with a flood. I make this promise to you, all of mankind and all **animals**. And then God said, "Look up in the sky." **Noah** looked up and saw a beautiful rainbow. "You see, I have set my rainbow in the sky. This will always remind us of the promise between you and me."

So, the next time you see a rainbow, think of Noah and the flood. Remember that God loves you, and that he has promised never to send a flood again.

Tips/Advice:

This activity is supposed to be lively and therefore engaging. However set clear ground rules, such as to only shout the response once when you hear the key word, to only shake the maracas for three seconds etc.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

Follow up: You could draw a large boat and a Noah figure on a large piece of sugar paper. After they have heard the story you could ask the children to add drawings of animals. They could even add drawings of themselves or their family to show that God has saved us too.



10 minutes



No maximum number
depending on
adequate supervision.



10 minutes



No maximum number
depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 Noah Says

Aim:

To be able to listen to instructions.

Instructions:

- Play the game "Simon says" but use the phrase Noah says. Children only follow instructions that contain the words "Noah says".
- If Children are wrong they sit down.
- Once a winner has been established remind the children that the animals did what Noah said, and Noah did what God said.

Activity 4 Colours Race

Equipment:

Chairs

Preparation:

Set up chairs in a circle, one less than there are children in the group.

Instructions:

- The children sit on the chairs in a circle. Ask one child to volunteer to stand in the middle.
- Assign each child a colour, the colours must be repeated at least once.
- The child in the middle says: "I see a beautiful rainbow and in it I see the colour....".
- The two (or more) children who have been assigned this colour, stand up and race to swap seats, whilst the child in the middle tries to get to the seat first.
- Whoever is left over at the end without a chair, stands in the middle and again says: I see a beautiful rainbow and in it I see the colour....". etc.
- When the child in the middle simply says: "I see a beautiful rainbow!" all children must swap seats.

At the end of the game ask the children if they remember what the rainbow is supposed to remind us of?



Aim:

To teach the children about the story of Joshua.

Introduction:

The book of Joshua covers about thirty years in the history of Israel looking at the five years of Joshua's military campaigns. The book starts where Deuteronomy ends showing us Israel camped by the Jordan River on the verge of entering the Promised Land. Joshua tells the story of Israel's victory at Jericho and Israel's settlement there.

Memory Verse:

Joshua 24:24

And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

Activity 1 The Walls of Jericho

Aim:

To learn the story of Joshua from Joshua 1-6 – The Walls of Jericho.

Preparation:

- Read through Joshua 1-6
- Set up a table with paper and pens.

Equipment:

- Sellotape
- Bible
- Paper/Card
- Pens/Pencils
- Chairs (to make walls of Jericho)

Instructions:

Moses died and God chose Joshua to lead the Israelites into the promised land. God promised Joshua victory and prosperity in the Promised Land if the people would always obey God's Word. Before Joshua prepared his army he prepared himself. The Israelites promised to follow Joshua and always obey God's Word. Joshua sent spies into Canaan to study the defences of the great city of Jericho. Somebody told the King of Jericho that there were spies in town and so he sent his soldiers to look for them. The soldiers began the search at Rahab's house, where the men were hiding. Rahab hid the men on the roof of her house, which was built into the city wall, under some flax stalks. The soldiers could not find the men and after they had left, Rahab used a scarlet rope to lower the men down safely outside the city wall. Rahab helped the spies because she knew God was with them and had given them the land and she wanted God to spare her life. The spies promised to save Rahab and her family if she tied some of the scarlet rope to her window and stayed inside the house.

Then the spies went back to report to Joshua that the people in the land were afraid of them. Before they could reach Jericho, the Israelites had to cross the great Jordan River into the Promised Land. But there was no bridge!



15 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Joshua 1 - 6

How would the people cross?

The river was flooded from all the rain and was very high and difficult to cross but God told Joshua that the priests should lead the soldiers and people, carrying the ark which held the Ten Commandments. When the priests' feet touched the river's edge, God kept His promise and did an amazing miracle - He made a dry path right through the river. The Bible says that the river stopped flowing and piled up in a heap a great distance away. Would that be amazing to see?

All the people crossed the river safely and the God told Joshua to send one person from each of the twelve tribes to take a stone from the river bed and place them in the camp where they were staying to be a reminder to their children that God helped them to cross the river safely and that God keeps His promises and to remind them of His great power and love for His people.

As Joshua planned his attack, God sent the Captain of His army from Heaven to remind Israel's new leader that God wins the battles for His people and he told Joshua how to attack Jericho.

It was a very strange plan!

He told Joshua to march around the city once with all the armed men and to do this every day for six days. He was to have seven priests carry trumpets of rams' horns in front of the ark and on the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. God said, 'When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the army will go straight in.' So they were to blow their trumpets and shout, and the city walls would fall down flat!

Joshua and his army did what God had commanded and on the seventh day the priest blew the ram's horn and just as God had promised the great walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

Only Rahab's house in the wall was safe. She had left the scarlet rope hanging from the window. Joshua's men rescued Rahab and her family and then Jericho was destroyed, as God commanded.



Activity 2 The Lord Says

Aim:

To get children to think about what it means to obey God and what He wants us to do by contrasting ridiculous things with true Godly behaviour.

Preparation:

Memory Verse – Joshua 24:24

And the people said to Joshua, “We will serve the LORD our God and obey him.”

Instructions:

‘The Lord Says’ is a version of “Simon Says”

The story of Joshua is a great example of someone who obeyed God and His Words. God wants us to obey Him too and that is why we read the Bible so that we can find out what God wants us to do.

We are going to play a game called - The Lord says – this is like Simon says.

It will help us to remember that we need to listen to God.

So if I say “The Lord says” you do it - if I say do this or do that then you must not do it.

Let’s have a practice run.

So if i said “The Lord says – Stretch up to the sky” it would be correct and you should all do it, but if i said “Jump up and down on the spot” you should not do it as “The Lord” did not say to do it.



10 minutes



4+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.

Activity 3 Joshua’s Maze

Aim:

To get through the maze.

Equipment:

- Joshua’s maze template
- Pens/Pencils
- Colouring Pens/Pencils

Instructions:

- Give each child a Maze template and remind them of the story of Joshua and the people of Israel crossing the River Jordan.
- Tell them that they too are on a journey and they can let God lead them or they can go on their own path. It is so much better to listen and obey God.
- They could finish off by colouring the maze in.



10 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



**Aim:**

Looking at the stories that Jesus told about Seeds.

Introduction:

Jesus told his parables in real life situations using the examples of farming, greed, and love. This would help him to build a visual picture for the listeners who could understand his imagery. The imagery in His parables is full of spiritual truths.

Jesus used parables to hide some of these spiritual truths from people who cared more about being entertained than being saved. Only those who were spiritually awake understood the truth behind the imagery. Because of this, many people did not understand Jesus' teaching.

Activity 1 The Parable of the Sower

Aim:

To look at the parable of the Sower from Mark 4.

Equipment:

- Seeds
- Tray
- Compost
- Fork

Preparation:

You'll need some packets of seeds and a tray of compost.

Instructions:

Introduce the story by showing some packets of seeds and asking what would happen if you planted them in different places – demonstrate the different places by:

- planting some on the floor. Will you get any carrots?
- planting them on a table?
- in someone's hair?
- or just by throwing the packet on the floor?

Tell the story from Mark 4 in simple language.

Explain to the children that you will need some help with this story which will make it loads more fun

You will need to divide the children into 4 groups who will act out the story as you read it.

Seed that fell on a footpath – get the children to walk on the spot and use their hands to peck like birds.

Seed that fell on shallow soil – the children need to start crouched on the ground and then grow slowly and then shrink and fall to the floor dead.

Seed that fell among thorns – the children need to put their hands to their necks and show themselves being strangled by weeds and then fall down dead. They can make a choking noise.



20 minutes



4+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Mark 4



Spread out the four groups so that you don't have any accidents.

Seed that fell on good soil – the children need to grow up strong and show strong arms like a body builder looking very healthy.

Then as the story teller you can mime throwing seed (or use something to represent seed) to all the children who are crouching down in their different groups

Now plant the seeds properly in the compost.

Tips/Advice:

Let the children really enjoy this session. If you have a low number of children get them to act out each seed together as a group rather than separating into smaller groups.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

After you have finished the story sit all of the children down and ask them if they know - What is a parable? Tell them that it is a story with a hidden meaning – sometimes a parable has many different hidden meanings. Jesus told parables so that only people who really wanted to - could understand what he was talking about. .

**Activity 2****The Tiny Mustard Seed & The Big Tree Story & Wordsearch****Equipment:**

- Story
- Wordsearch
- Pens/Pencils

Preparation:

Familiarise yourself with the story and check that you can find all the words in the wordsearch.

Instructions:

Many people came to hear Jesus' teaching and they gathered in a large crowd to listen to his stories/parables. Jesus told them many things and he told them stories about God's Kingdom. Jesus told them that God's kingdom is like a mustard seed. Hold up a mustard seed to show the children and tell them that it is one of the smallest seeds in the world. But it is a seed that keeps on growing and growing and it becomes one of the tallest trees. It is so big that some birds come and make their nests in its branches and live in it.

What Jesus was teaching the crowds is that God's kingdom can start very small and can grow and grow into something very big. God's love can start in one person's heart and when they share that love God's kingdom grows and grows.

Hand out a wordsearch to each child and let them find the words. There are 9 words to find including:

- Jesus
- Bird
- Mustard Seed
- Branches
- Kingdom
- Love
- Grow
- Heart
- God



20 minutes



2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.





15 minutes



3+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 The Parable of the Weeds

Aim:

To understand Jesus' Parable.

Equipment:

- A hoe
- Gardening fork
- Weed killer

Instructions:

The Parable of the Weeds

Matthew 13: 24 - 30

Tell the story in an age appropriate language.

Parable of the weeds.

I have lots of weeds in my garden. I planted my garden in good soil, and yet there are still weeds everywhere. As in a garden full of plants and flowers, one of the biggest enemies are weeds. Weeds will take all the nutrients from the soil – all the good things that help plants grow and sometimes the weeds will choke good plants.

So what can we do about the weeds? Well, you can dig them up with a gardening fork or a hoe and cut down the weeds, but what can happen is that you will probably cut out some of the good plants by mistake.

A really quick way to get rid of weeds is to use weed killer. Weed killer is like poison to the weeds. But the problem with using weed killer to get rid of weeds is that it can't tell a weed from a flower or a special plant like a tomato plant or carrots. Weed killer will kill every plant where it is put. And that is not what you want in your garden is it?

Sometimes, it's a better idea to leave the weeds alone until it is time to dig up your carrots or when your tomatoes have finished giving you tomatoes. Then when your plant has given you fruit and vegetables you then separate the weeds from the good plants.

In the parable of the weeds Jesus told a story where he compared his church to a garden that was full of weeds. Sometimes there may be people you meet that don't fit in and they do things that aren't very kind and they might not believe what Jesus teaches in the Bible. Sometimes they might say nasty things about the other people and try to hurt them. They are like weeds in a garden.

In his story, Jesus said that we should not worry about pulling up weeds that grow around us. ~~If we do, we might do more harm than good. He says that we should leave the weeds for God~~ to take care of - and concentrate on doing what he wants us to do - which is producing good fruit.



Introduction:

The title of this book comes from its principal character, Esther. In this it is similar to many other Old Testament books (e.g., Joshua, Ruth, Samuel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Job, et al.). In Esther there is no direct mention of God. The genre of the Book is historical narrative. This book records the circumstances that elevated Esther to the influential position of Queen and her part in saving the Jewish people.

Activity 1 Esther – The Story

Aim:

To tell the story of Esther.

Equipment:

Bible

Preparation:

- Read through the book of Esther and familiarise yourself with the story.
- This is a difficult story for young children to follow, so choose the main parts to tell.

Instructions:

King Xerxes was very rich. One night He commanded his wife Queen Vashti to come and see his friends, but she refused and he became furious and would not allow Vashti to be Queen after that. When he began to miss having a wife his helpers had a beauty contest. The most beautiful woman would be the new Queen. Esther was a young Jewish woman and was chosen to take part in the contest. The King liked Esther best of all and chose her to be his Queen. Esther may not have understood why she was chosen to be the Queen, but God had a plan and as we listen we will see how God uses Esther for His plan.

Esther's uncle Mordecai took care of Esther and raised her as his own daughter. Mordecai was a Jewish man who loved and obeyed God and taught Esther the same. Before Esther became Queen, Mordecai told her not to tell anyone that she was Jewish. Mordecai loved Esther so he sat at the King's gate to be near her. One day by the gate he overheard two men planning to kill King Xerxes so he told Esther and she told the King, then the two men were put to death.

King Xerxes had a noble man called Haman who was the highest of the King's men. King Xerxes commanded everyone to kneel and honour Haman when they saw him. Mordecai knew it was against God's commandments to bow down to anyone but God so he refused. This made Haman angry and he hated Mordecai. Haman knew that Mordecai was Jewish so that made Haman hate all Jews. Haman went to King Xerxes and asked him to make a law that all the Jews to be killed. He said that there were people in the Kingdom who wouldn't obey the King's laws. The King listened to Haman and made a law that all the Jews should be destroyed.

This was terrible news – because the Jews were God's people. But God loves His people and protects them from harm. Mordecai heard about Haman's plan and he cried out wailing. He sent a messenger to tell Esther to do something to stop this happening. When Esther heard she was very scared and knew that if she went to the King without being invited she could be killed right on the spot. Only people who were invited could come and stand before his throne. Mordecai encouraged Esther and told her that it was for such a time in as this that God had planned to use her for His purposes. If she didn't help then God would use someone else to save His people.



20 minutes



4+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Esther

Even though she might die, Esther and her people prayed and fasted for three days and then she went to see the King. God gave courage to Esther. When the King saw her he smiled, held out his sceptre for her to touch to show that it was ok to come into the room. The King asked her what she wanted, and she asked him and Haman to a banquet.

At the banquet she didn't tell Xerxes about Haman's evil plan but invited the King and Haman again to a banquet the next night.

Haman was very proud that he was the only person invited to attend the King and Queen's banquet and he left the banquet very happy. On his way home he walked by Mordecai and was furious that he would not kneel and honour him. At home he told his family about his invitation to eat at the banquet with the King and Queen and about how much he hated Mordecai. Haman's wife and his friends told him that he should build a gallows so that Mordecai could be hung on it. Haman was delighted with this idea and had the gallows built.

The night before Esther's banquet, the King could not sleep and asked his servant to bring him a history book for him to read. God was in control and there was no accident that the King could not sleep. The history book was brought for him to read and it was all about when Mordecai overheard the plot to have him killed. King Xerxes understood Mordecai had not been honoured or rewarded for saving his life so he planned to reward Mordecai.

When Haman came to see the King to get permission to hang Mordecai on the gallows the King asked him, "What should be done for the man the King delights to honour?" Haman was very proud and assumed the King wanted to honour him so he came up with how he would want to be honoured. Then King Xerxes told him to give Mordecai all that Haman had come up with for himself.

At the banquet Esther knew it was God's time to tell the King that she and her people were going to be killed. She told the King that she was a Jew and about the law to kill all the Jews. The King was angry and asked who would dare to think about killing his wife. The King loved Esther and he was very angry. Esther pointed at Haman and said that he was the man who wanted to destroy the Jews.

King Xerxes had Haman put to death on the gallows he had built for Mordecai.

God used Mordecai and Esther to save His people, the Jews, from destruction. King Xerxes made a new law saying that Jews could protect themselves from those who were going to attack them. The Jews were saved because of the faithfulness and obedience of Esther.

Tips/Advice:

This is quite a long story and it could help to keep the children's attention if you illustrate the story with puppets or with toys.



10 minutes



2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 2 Esther Quiz

Aim:

To reinforce the story of Esther.

Equipment:

- Esther quiz template
- Pens/Pencils

Instructions:

Give the children a copy of the Esther quiz to complete in pairs or groups.


20 minutes

**3+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.**

Esther 4; 14

Activity 3 Created For A Purpose

Aim:

To think about how God used Esther and think about ourselves and how God will use us.

Equipment:

- Bible
- Jigsaw Puzzle (any jigsaw with enough pieces)

Instructions:

- Give each child a piece of a jigsaw puzzle. They will hold this as you talk.
- Read Esther 4:14:
God created each one of us unique and special and different from each other. There is only one of you and one of me and we are very important to God and to the families that we are a part of.

Sometimes we don't feel that special – we feel like we don't fit sometimes that we are the wrong shape, the wrong look or just in the wrong place. A bit like that piece of puzzle that you are holding.

But with each piece of a puzzle there is an exact place where it fits, an exact part of the picture, part of the story that needs to be there – without it the picture is not complete.

Well Esther was like a piece of puzzle that had an exact place to be – she was a Jew who became a Queen and saved her people. Mordecai said to her -

And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this. (NIV)

He could see that Esther was part of God's plan and we know – don't we – that we have a very important part in God's plan.

Let's put this puzzle together and see what the picture is made up of – we need to work together to make this puzzle work and to see the big picture. The puzzle is like God's plan for each one of us and we can only see a little piece of God's great big plan.

We need to be obedient and follow what God has asked us to do so that we can be part of God's great big picture.

Tips/Advice:

Get a large puzzle with enough pieces for each child to have a piece. It does not matter if it is a bit bigger as you can work together to complete the picture. Get the children to guess what they think the picture is of.





Aim:

To teach the children about Jacob.

Introduction:

The author of Genesis spends ten whole chapters on Jacob. Jacob is the son of Isaac and Rebekah, the grandson of Abraham and Sarah. Jacob's son is Joseph.

Activity 1 Jacob & Esau

Aim:

To learn about Esau and Jacob and to think about forgiveness.

Equipment:

- Pens/Pencils
- Jacob + Esau template
- Bible
- Jacob and Esau Word Search template

Preparation:

Read Genesis 25-33

Instructions:

Has anyone ever tried to trick you? How did you feel?

Today's Bible story is about two brothers, Jacob and Esau. Tell the story in simple language.

What can we learn from Jacob and Esau?

Sometimes it is very hard to forgive someone, especially when they have done mean or sneaky things to deceive us.

Forgiveness is very important. How can we forgive others?

What has God done to forgive us? All of us have done things that have hurt God. God loves us so much that He made a way for us to be clean of all our wrongs.

Jesus died and came back to life so that if we believe in Him, He will wash away all our sin and make us clean on the inside. God forgives us and tells us to forgive others too just like Esau forgave Jacob.

Give the children the templates with the quiz and/or word search to help reinforce the story.

Let's Pray:

Dear God,
Can you please help each of us to
forgive others this week and help
us do things in your way.
Amen



20 minutes



2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.



Genesis

25: 19 - 34



10 minutes



Ensure adequate supervision when using scissors.



Genesis
28: 1- 22



Ensure adequate supervision when using scissors

Activity 2

The Story Of Jacob's Dream About A Stairway To Heaven

Aim:

To learn the story and think about how Jesus bridged the gap between heaven and earth.

Equipment:

- Cardboard strips of 10" x 3"
- Wool
- Sellotape
- Hole Puncher
- Scissors

Preparation:

Read Genesis 28:1-22

He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the LORD. (NIV)

Instructions:

Tell the children that they must listen very carefully because there will be a game afterwards and they need to answer some questions.

There is a story in the Bible about a man named Jacob who had a dream about a ladder that reached up to heaven. Does anyone know this story?

Well, let me read it to you from the Bible.

Jacob started on a journey to a town called Haran. On his way there he reached a certain place and stopped to spend the night. He took a stone and put it under his head and went to sleep. As he slept, Jacob had a dream about a stairway that went from earth all the way up to heaven. In his dream there were angels going up and down the ladder. He looked and at the top of the stairway he saw God. Then God spoke to Jacob and told him

"I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."

When Jacob woke up, he thought, "Surely God is here and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's

household, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."



This is a wonderful story of how God blessed Jacob and his descendants, but it is also about what Jesus has done for you and me. Jesus came down to earth to make a way for you and me to get to heaven. Jesus is the stairway that allows us to go and meet with God. Jesus is the only way for us to get to heaven and to be with God.

Dear Jesus, thank you for blessing Jacob and thank you for making a way for each one of us to get to heaven. Thank you that you sent Jesus to help us to make that choice. Amen.

Make a simple stairway by following the instructions

- Punch holes into the cardboard on either side to create the steps. See picture.
- Tape one end of the wool at the bottom of the stairway and then thread through until you reach the top.
- Tape or tie the wool at the top.
- Make some small angels and have the children colour them in.
- Give the children two angels each and have them place them behind the wool to secure them. They can then move them up and down the stairway.





10 minutes



6+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 Ladder Hop

Aim:

To learn the story and think about how Jesus bridged the gap between heaven and earth.

Equipment:

- Chalk or masking tape
- Dice
- Ladder hop questions template

Preparation:

- Mark out 2 hopscotch/stairways on the floor using masking tape or chalk
- Print out questions

Instructions:

Get your children into two teams. Mark out your hopscotch/stairway area. Get the children to line up in front of their stairway.

Each child gets to throw the dice they can hop and jump to that number and then they get a question. If they get their question correct they can throw again if not the next person throws the dice and joins them on the board. Once they throw beyond 10 they have completed the stairway and move into the finish area where they must sit down in a line and wait for the last team member to join them. First team to finish and all be sitting quietly in a line wins.

Tips/Advice:

- You may need to ask easier questions to get some children off the stairs. There is an easy and a hard section in the questions sheet.
- You may also need more questions if you have a big group – just add some general knowledge questions.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

You could adapt this game to playing regular hopscotch with a question to get off the grid into the winning area.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego

SPIRIT

God and me



Aim:

To teach the children about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.

Introduction:

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are known from the book of Daniel Chapters 1 – 3, for their exclusive devotion to God, having been delivered safely by God from being burned alive in a fiery furnace. They were three young Jews, of noble birth from Judah and friends of Daniel.

Activity 1 The Fiery Furnace

Aim:

To learn about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and their faithfulness.

Equipment:

Bible

Preparation:

Read Daniel 1-3

Instructions:

The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace - Daniel 3

King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge image of gold. He then called all of his officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. He then had a herald call out to everyone, 'I command everyone as soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.'

So as soon as all the people heard the sound of music, they fell down and worshipped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

At this time some of the officials denounced the Jews and said to King Nebuchadnezzar,

'May the king live forever! Your Majesty has issued a decree that everyone who hears the sound of music must fall down and worship the image of gold, but there are some Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who do not listen to you. Your Majesty they do not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.'

Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? Now when you hear the sound of the music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego said, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is

able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."



20 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Daniel 1- 3

Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and firmly tied up, the three fell into the blazing furnace.

Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his officials *"Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"*

They replied, *"Certainly, Your Majesty."*

He said, *"Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, they are not tied up or harmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."*

Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, *"Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"*

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, and the officials crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

Then Nebuchadnezzar said, *"Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and ignored the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God."*

Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

The three boys chose to do what was right in the eyes of God and they followed God even though it meant they could be hurt or even killed. The boys were not sure that God would choose to save their lives but they knew that they could not and would not bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold.

God commanded his people in the ten commandments that - You shall have no other gods before me - Exodus 20:3

When we stand up for what is right in God's eyes God will be with us.

Let's Pray:

Dear God

Thank you that Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego listened to your commands and honoured You.

Thank you that you protected them from harm because they trusted in You. Please help us to trust in You too.

Amen

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

- Watch the Veggie Tale film that goes with this story.
- Ask some simple questions about the story.



10 minutes


 6+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

 Ensure adequate
supervision when
using scissors and
glue.

Activity 2 The Fiery Furnace Craft

Aim:

To reinforce the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego through a craft activity.

Equipment:

- A4 card
- Coloured tissue paper
- Scraps of old material (to sloth figures)
- Colouring pens / pencils
- Scissors
- Glue

Preparation:

You might want to prepare an example of the picture to show the children, but explain that this is only your version. They don't have to do it exactly the same.

Instructions:

- Use A4 Card as the base for the picture.
- Create three figures. They could be drawn directly onto the card or cut out of other card and stuck on.
- Colour the figures and glue on material clothes.
- Create the fire using coloured tissue paper – you could have some pre-cut of different colours and different lengths.
- The children could add a fourth figure – the Son of God



10 minutes



6+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 Taking a Stand

Aim:

To ask the children to think about their actions and standing up for what is right.

Instructions:

- It can seem hard for children to take a stand but in most cases, it doesn't cost that much to do what is right.
- Get the children to think about the consequences that taking a stand had for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

What might happen to us when we take a stand?

- Children might laugh at us—but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown in jail.
- Children will think we are unpopular—but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were sent to be burned in the furnace.
- We need to remember that it does not cost us very much to stand up for what is right and to stand up for God in our country.
- In other parts of the world, people are put in prison, hurt, or even killed for believing in God.

Let's have a think about how we can take a stand. You can read out the questions from the table below and see how the children respond. You could give the children the possible answers as below if they are struggling.

Questions	Possible Answers	
Children in your class will not play with the new girl. What will you do?	Ask her to play with you.	Ignore her too.
The teacher is cross with the class and makes you all stay in at playtime	Stay cross with the teacher all day	Make sure that you behave well
Your Mum says you cannot watch TV	Get cross and have a tantrum	Play with something else
You break something in your house	Tell your parents and say sorry	Put it back where it was and say nothing
You want some more chocolate cake after you are told that you have had enough	You sneak into the cupboard when no one is around and have some more	You listen and obey what you have been told
Your Dad asks you if you have brushed your teeth	You lie and say yes of course	You say I will go and do them now
There is a boy in the park who has fallen over and hurt himself	You go over and ask him if he is ok and go with him to find his Mum.	You laugh at him and go to play on the slide with your other friends

Let's pray:

Thank you God for our freedom to be Christians
and please help us to stand up for what
is right and to stand up for You
whenever we can.
Amen



Aim:

To teach the children about Jesus' New Life - Easter

Introduction:

Easter is the greatest festival of the whole Christian year. The Easter story starts on Palm Sunday when Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem by people waving branches from palm trees. In the days of Jesus if a leader wanted to enter a city as a result of success in war he rode on a horse, but if he came for peace he rode on a donkey. Good Friday is called good because, although Jesus was crucified, his death opened the way into Heaven for all of us sinners. After three days Jesus rose from the dead and many people who had seen Jesus die met him after he rose from the dead. We celebrate this wonderful miracle.

Write the letters E A S T E R onto 6 large pieces of card, ask 6 children to volunteer to hold the cards for you.

Tell this story from the Bible –

Jesus' body was taken off the cross, wrapped up in linen and put into a tomb. The tomb was a small cave. The first child holds up the letter T.

So then the cross was empty. The second child holds up the letter E.

The man who took Jesus to the tomb was called Joseph and he came from a place called Arimathea. The third child holds up the letter A.

Later on the tomb was closed with a large rock which was rolled in front of the entrance once the body of Jesus was put inside. The fourth child holds up R.

All of Jesus' friends were very sad. The final child holds up the letter S. (one child will wait as their E is in the second word.

The letters will read now read the word TEARS.

So the first Good Friday ended in with many people in T-E-A-R-S.

But there is amazing news to come - EASTER day itself.

The women who had been with Jesus wanted to put herbs and spices on Jesus' body and they went to the tomb very early in the morning on the third day.

Arriving EARLY in the morning - child holds up an E
at the garden of Joseph of ARIMATHEA - child holds up the A
they were shocked because the STONE - child holds up the S was rolled away.

Looking in the tomb TOMB - child holds up T

~~The women found that it was EMPTY - child holds up E.~~

An angel was in the tomb and he told them that Jesus was not there he had already RISEN - child holds up the letter R.

The word of course now spells EASTER.

The resurrection (coming back to life) of Jesus turned everyone's sadness into joy, because Jesus defeated death, meaning that death is not the end if you believe in Jesus.

Memory Verse:

But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven. Matthew 26:64





15 minutes



2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 1 Easter Poem

Aim:

To look at the Easter story through a poem and to create pictures based on the poem.

Equipment:

- Pens/Pencils
- Bibles
- String/ribbon
- Hole punch
- Paper
- Colouring Pens/Pencils

Instructions:

Read out the poem, whilst reading out the poem the children could draw. You could have pictures on the table and they may like to copy them. It would be good to take the poem home and have it put up at home for all the family to remember. This could mean that you print out on card or create a way to hang the poem – punch holes and put some string or ribbon in to hang it.

Easter Joy

*Jesus came to earth, To show us how to live,
How to put others first, How to love and how to give.*

*Then He set about His work, That God sent Him to do;
He took our punishment on Himself; He made us clean and new.*

*He could have saved Himself, Calling angels from above,
But He chose to pay our price for sin; He paid it out of love.*

*Our Lord died on Good Friday, But the cross did not destroy
His resurrection on Easter morn That fills our hearts with joy.*

*Now we know our earthly death, Like His, is just a rest.
We'll be forever with Him In heaven, where life is best.*

*So we live our lives for Jesus, Think of Him in all we do.
Thank you Saviour; Thank you Lord. Help us love like you!*

This is a lovely Easter Poem by Joanna Fuchs.

You can show the children some representations of Easter such as the cross (empty) and the tomb (empty) and they can draw pictures around their poetry sheets.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

If the children have good literacy you could get them to write their own poems of thanks for all that Jesus did at Easter.


10 minutes

**4+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.**

**Matthew
21: 1 - 11**

**Be careful that your
donkey and Jesus
travel safely and pick
the children according
to strength for the
donkey and weight for
Jesus.**

Activity 2 Palm Sunday

Aim:

To look at Palm Sunday and to follow the story of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem.

Equipment:

- Palm Fronds/similar garden leaves or branches
- Donkey ears
- Cloaks

Preparation:

Read through Matthew 21:1-11

Instructions:

Before Jesus went into Jerusalem, He sent two of His disciples to a village. He told them they would see a donkey with its colt tied there. Jesus said they should bring the animals back to Him and if anyone asked what they were doing, they were to tell them that the Lord needed them.

An amazing thing happened – the disciples went to where Jesus had told them and they found the donkey and her young just as Jesus had said, and they brought them to Him.

There is a verse in Zechariah in the Old Testament where God had told the people that their king would come riding on a donkey's colt. It is found in verse 9:9.

"Say to Daughter Zion, See, your king comes to you, gentle and riding on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Jesus was the king who fulfilled that prophecy in Zechariah. Jesus is the king sent from God to save anybody who trusts in Him.

The crowds got very excited when they saw Jesus coming into town on the donkey and they shouted and worshipped Him as he passed by - by laying down their coats and palm branches on the ground. The people praised Jesus, saying,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked, *"Who is this?"* The crowds answered, *"This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*

Jesus came to Jerusalem that day to fulfil God's plans. He was coming to Jerusalem to die on the cross. The people who were worshipping Him did not understand God's plan and they thought that Jesus was going to be King on earth and be a powerful leader. But that was not God's plan.

Read through the story once with the children. Then, read through again allocating roles for the children to act, using the props provided.

Let's pray and thank God for His incredible plan:

Dear God, thank you so much that you sent Jesus into Jerusalem that Palm Sunday. Thank you that you sent Him to die for each one of us, please help us to understand what that means for us. Amen



15 minutes



2+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 Jesus' Death & Resurrection

Aim:

To learn in an appropriate way about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Instructions:

Jesus came to live on earth because God had a plan and a purpose for Him. Jesus lived a perfect life but had to die on the cross to pay the price for the sins of all people.

It is hard for us to understand why he had to do this and even the crowds who had worshipped Him on Palm Sunday didn't understand what was happening. For them, Jesus was supposed to be their king. But he ended up being crucified (killed) by the Romans. But the good news is - as some of you may know - Jesus did not stay dead!

What happened?

Jesus rose from the dead after three days – like the prophets had told people and He showed Himself to His disciples. He told them that He will come again and when He returns, He will come in power and glory and to show the world that He is the King of Kings.

The Bible says that everybody will kneel before Him and everybody will know and accept on that day, that Jesus is Lord.

Well let's have a little think about what things take us away from God. What things do we do that God doesn't like?

- Someone steals from a shop
- One of the Juniors is always swearing and using God's name as a swear word
- A robber steals all the money from the bank – probably about £1 million pounds!
- A burglar kills an old lady
- A little girl lies to her mum all the time
- A boy tells his mother that it is his sister who broke the TV.

Ask the children to think of things - lying, stealing, cheating etc.

The Bible tells us that Jesus died for all the things we do wrong, big ones, little ones, secret ones, ones we have not even done yet. There is nothing that we can do to get right with God because Jesus has paid the price by dying on the cross in our place.

But we don't have to wait until Jesus comes back to accept Jesus into our lives. We can make Jesus the King of our lives by asking Him to come and live within our hearts and ask Him to guide our lives.

So the Bible says that it is sin that separates us from God but Jesus died on the cross so that we could make up with God and spend eternity in heaven with Him and with Jesus. Wow, how amazing is that going to be?

Let's Pray:

Dear God, thank you that Jesus died for me, thank you that he has paid for all of my sin and thank you that one day I can spend forever in heaven with you and Jesus. Amen

Additional Resources:

- Veggie Tales A Very Veggie Easter (Audio CD)
- A Very Veggie Easter (Veggie Tales)
- An Easter Carol (Veggie Tales)



Introduction:

These sessions will teach the children that many things have changed throughout time but one thing has not changed at all and that is the good news that Jesus came into this world as a baby because God loves us so much.

The Birth of Jesus divided time into BC (before Christ) and AD (A.D. stands for Anno Domini, which is Latin for "year of our Lord," and it means the number of years since the time when Jesus was born.)

Israel at the time of Jesus birth was under Roman occupation. The Roman's had Censuses every 14 years to tax the people.

Activity 1 Christmas Nativity Snow

Aim:

To reinforce teaching about the nativity by doing a snow globe craft.

Equipment:

- Small glass Jars
- Hot Glue Gun
- Mineral Oil/Baby Oil or water and glycerine (glycerine can be found in craft shops)
- Glitter
- Plastic Nativity Ornament (Christmas tree decoration)
- Small Piece of Cloth, Rubber Band & or ribbon

Preparation:

- Cut the cloth into circles
- Set up the area for craft making and ensure that the glue gun is away from the children's work space.
- Make sure that one leader is responsible for doing the gluing and does not leave the glue gun unattended at any point.

Instructions:

- Give each child an empty glass jar. (different shapes and sizes are good).
- Let each child choose a nativity decoration, look for something that can stand up. (Remove the string that attaches the decoration to the tree).
- Place the decoration in the centre of the jar lid and put the jar over it to ensure that the decoration will fit in the closed jar.
- Put some hot glue on the centre of the inside of each lid, (a leader should do this part) then place each decoration onto the glue.
- You can cover the glue with sand or glitter but make sure that you shake off any excess as it will end up in the liquid.
- Leave the lids to cool and the glue to dry.
- Pour the mineral oil / baby oil or water and glycerine $\frac{3}{4}$'s full in the jar.
- Add glitter to the jar for sparkle.
- Use the glue gun on the inside edge of the jar lid.
- Get a leader to carefully very tightly screw the lid onto the jar.
- You can add a piece of cloth around the jar's lid and use either a piece of ribbon or an elastic band to secure the material.



20 minutes



2+ No maximum number depending on adequate supervision.



Glue gun should only be used by leaders.



20 minutes



3+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Tips/Advice:

Check that all the decorations will fit into the size jars that you have.

Activity 2

Mary And Joseph Go To Bethlehem

Aim:

To get the children to think about the story and to extend their memory.

Equipment:

Chairs

Preparation:

Prepare a circle of chairs

Instructions:

- Get everyone to sit on a chair in a circle. Choose someone to start or get a leader to start.
- That person says 'Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem on a donkey'.
- The next child says: 'Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem on a donkey to have a baby'.
- The next child repeats what both the previous children said and then adds something.
- E.g. To stay in a stable, Under a star, To be visited by shepherds, To receive gifts from Kings, to fulfil the prophets
- Children take turns until one of them forgets something or forgets the order they are said. Each time this happens that child is out until there is only one person left.
- That person wins the game.

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

Song – Mary & Joseph go to Bethlehem - You could start with the song so that the children are reminded of the story.



20 minutes



5+ No maximum
number depending on
adequate supervision.

Activity 3 The Christmas Story – The Birth Of Jesus

Aim:

To teach the children about the birth of Jesus.

Equipment:

- Bible
- Wrapping paper
- Caesar's Decree
- Baby in a manger Christmas decoration

Preparation:

- Read through Luke 2:1-20
- Wrap up the "Baby in a manger" in a box.

Instructions:

The Birth of Jesus (NIV)

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was Governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Christmas is a time that we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. What do you do at home to get ready for Christmas?

Well when Mary and Joseph were getting ready for Jesus' Birth they had to travel a long way. Caesar who was like our Prime Minister sent out an order – let's read that order.

(Take the Caesar's decree scroll and read it out)

Every person must travel to the place where they were born and report to the government officers in that city. The ruler of all the land, Caesar Augustus has ordered that every person do this. Everyone must obey this order. Caesar commands all people to be counted. Do not disobey!

So everyone in the land had to travel. Imagine how many people that would be all travelling at the same time. So Joseph and Mary set out to travel to Bethlehem where Joseph was born. Mary was pregnant at the time so it was hard for her to make that journey. They had a donkey and Mary rode on that donkey. It was a long journey.

Before they made this journey an angel had come to Mary and told her that she would have a baby.

The Angel said - Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of God.

Wow that must have been a shock to meet a real angel. The Bible tells us that his name was the angel Gabriel and that he also appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him that Mary would give birth to God's Son and His name was Jesus because He would take away the sins of everyone in the world.

When they arrived in Bethlehem there were already hundreds of other people arriving to register for Caesar. When they tried to find somewhere to stay there was nowhere for them. They went around asking people and no one could help them until they came to an Inn and asked if they had anywhere for them to sleep. The innkeeper said that the only place he had left was in the stable where the animals sleep but it was warmer than sleeping outside. So Mary and Joseph went to the stable when it was time for Mary to have the baby Jesus.

So with the animals standing around, Mary gave birth to the baby Jesus in a Stable and after he was born they laid Him in a manger.

In our homes we give each other presents at Christmas don't we? I have a present here – can someone help me by opening it?

When the child has opened it ask them to show the group and tell them what it is.

Well, God gave us a very big present on that very first Christmas. He sent His Son to earth as a gift to all of us. God has given us such a special gift in Jesus – because Jesus is our way of getting to know God and of living forever with God. That is the best present that we have ever been given and it will last forever.

Let's Pray:

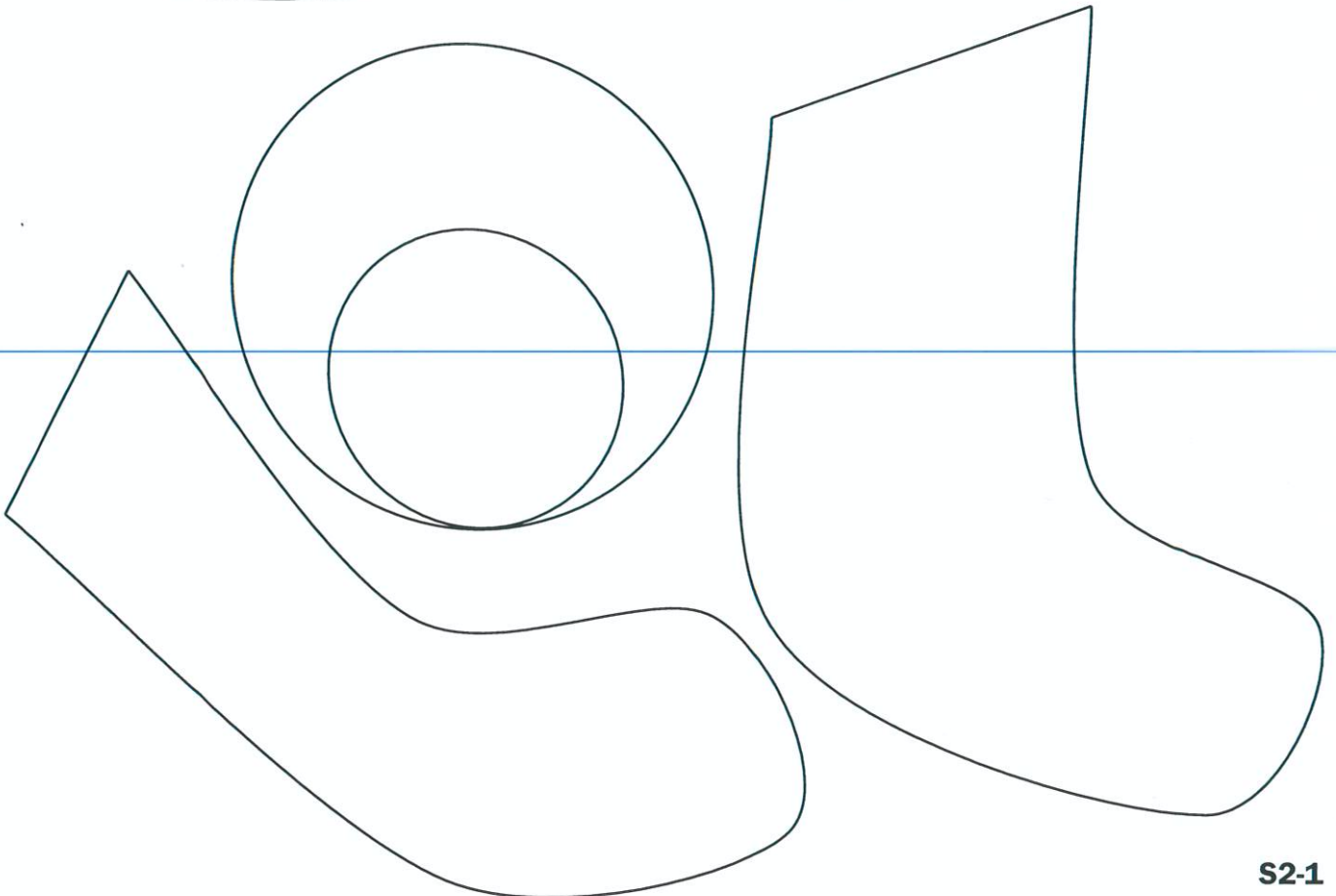
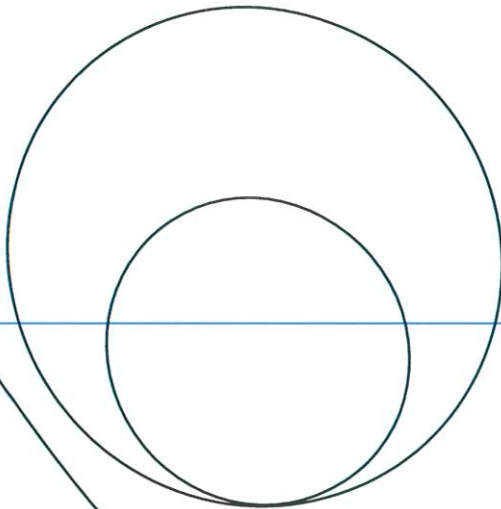
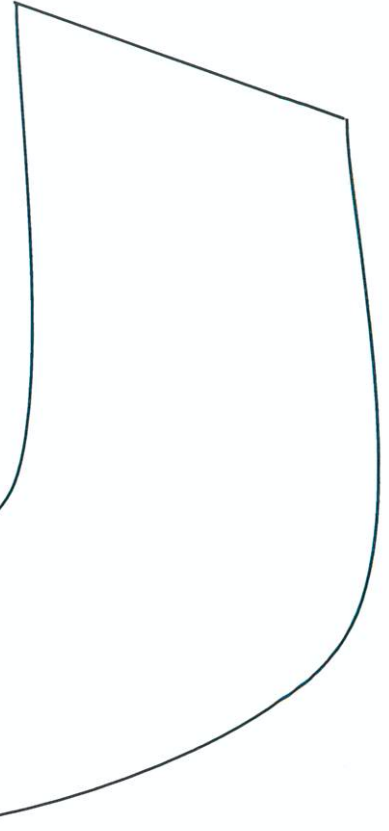
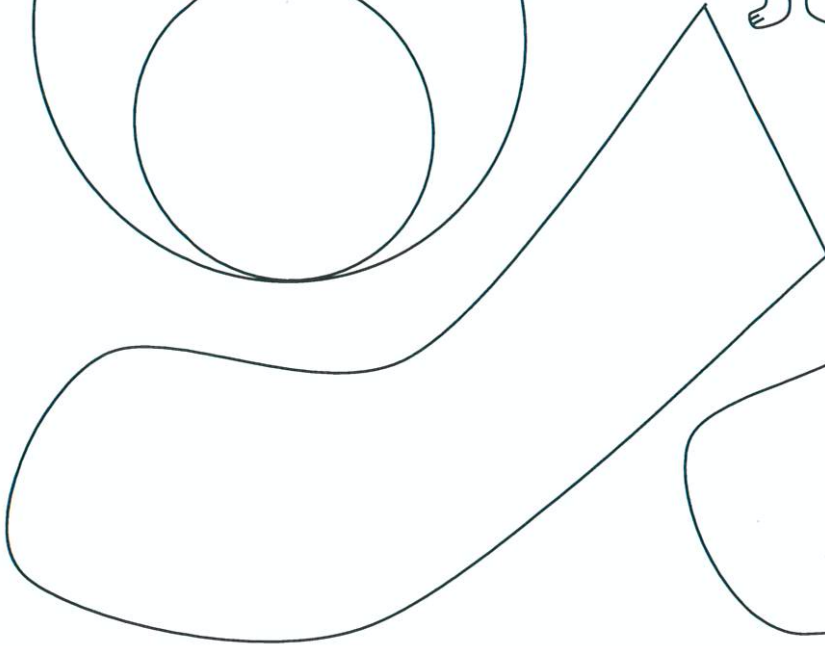
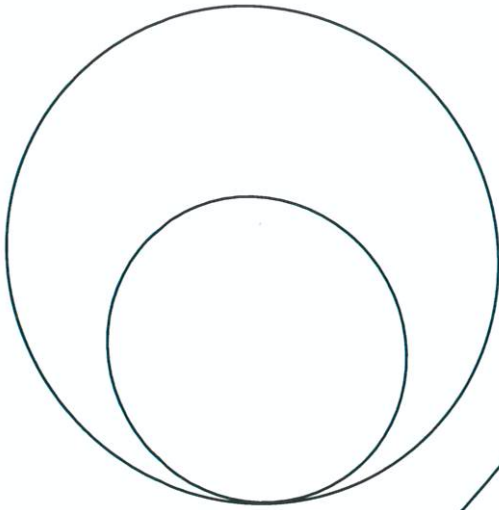
Dear God,
 Thank you for sending your son Jesus as
 a gift to each one of us on that first
 Christmas so that we might be able to
 trust in Him and live forever with you.
 Amen

Extension Tasks/Adaptations:

- You could get a leader to dress up as Caesar to make the story more interactive and act out the rest of the story to the children.
- Have a nativity set available for your children. The children could place the baby Jesus - after opening the present - into the Nativity scene after the session.

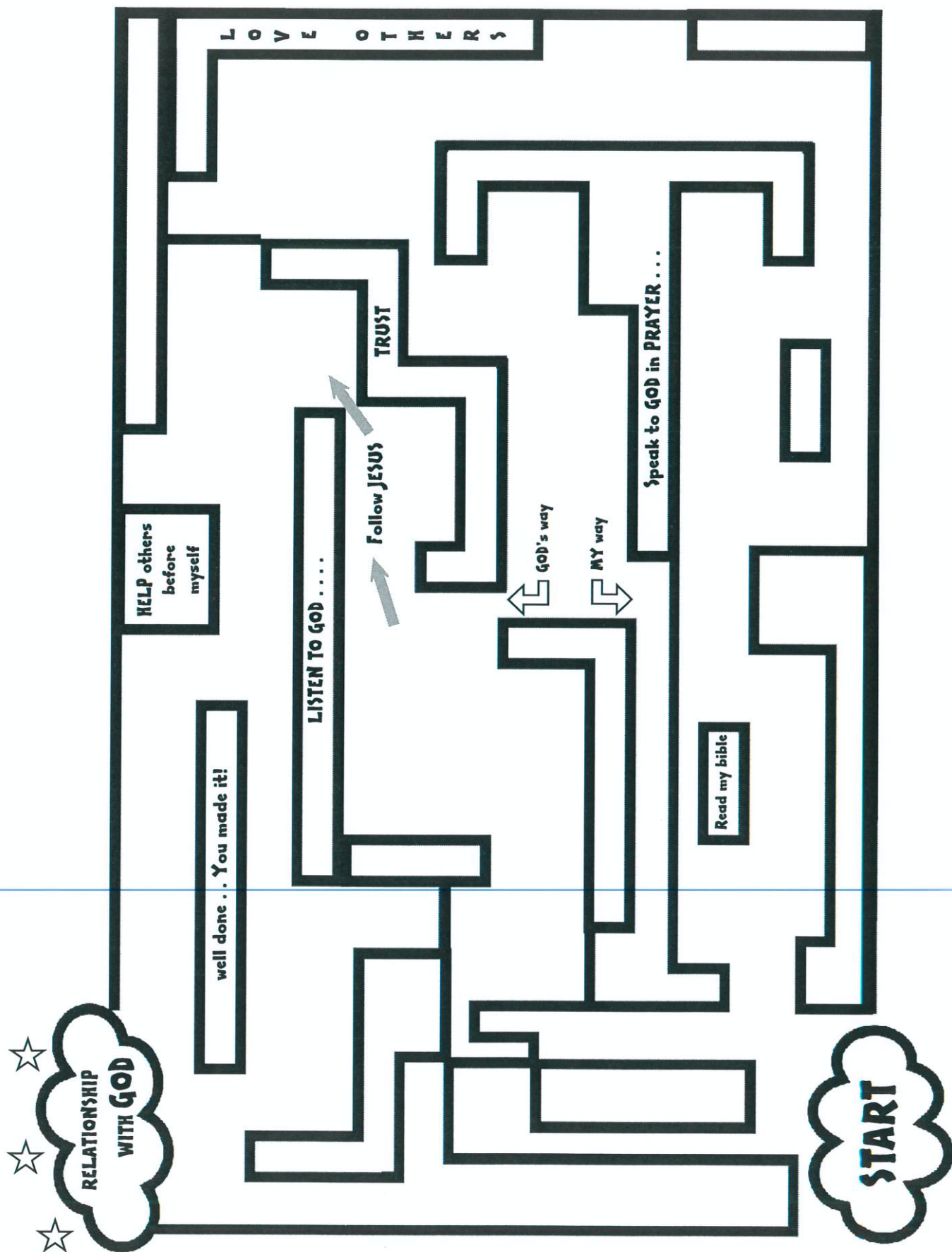
Prayer Bear

Cut out the shapes below which make up the prayer bear.



Joshua's Maze

Go from 'Start' and find your way around the maze . . .



The Tiny Mustard Seed & The Big

Find the words from the list below.

H	E	M	U	T	I	E	J	Q	S
M	O	O	E	H	C	N	A	R	B
T	T	S	E	E	D	X	Z	B	V
R	S	M	K	I	N	G	D	O	M
A	N	U	C	M	C	V	E	X	N
E	J	D	S	W	P	P	X	R	G
H	G	F	O	E	E	F	Q	J	F
J	L	Z	I	T	J	G	O	D	O
W	K	I	Z	T	G	G	R	O	W
V	Y	D	R	I	B	L	O	V	E

Words to find:

- Bird
- Branch
- God
- Grow
- Heart
- Jesus
- Kingdom
- Love
- Seed

Esther Quiz

1. The most important man in King Xerxes' Kingdom, after the King was _____.
2. This man tricked the King into passing a law that would kill all the _____.
3. _____ was the Queen, and she was also in danger.
4. Before she became the Queen, she had been adopted by _____.
5. If the Queen went to see the King without him calling her, she could be _____.
6. Esther _____ and _____ for three days before she went to see the King.
7. King Xerxes _____ Esther. He listened to her story and became very _____.
8. _____ was hanged for his evil plan.
9. The Jews were allowed to _____ themselves.
10. God used Mordecai and Esther to _____ his people.

Select words from the boxes below to insert in to the blank spaces for each question:

save	killed	loved	Mordecai
Haman	angry	prayed	fasted
Jews	Esther	Haman	defend

Jacob & Esau



Genesis 25:19-34

Here are some sentences that describe Jacob & Esau.

Can you match the characteristics to the right brother?

- Isaac’s favourite son
- Rebekah’s favourite son
- Was a hunter
- Was the eldest
- Stayed near home
- His name means red
- Cooked stew
- Asked for birthright in return for stew
- Was very hairy
- Despised his birthright
- Tricked his brother out of his inheritance
- Lied

Jacob	Esau

Jacob & Esau Wordsearch

Find the words from the list below.

D	K	S	R	T	I	R	B
B	E	G	T	S	N	R	R
O	H	S	A	E	O	T	E
C	D	A	P	T	W	W	T
A	C	E	H	I	X	I	N
J	H	E	R	O	S	N	U
S	R	U	A	S	E	E	H
S	Y	R	I	A	H	H	D

Words to find:

- Brothers
- Hairy
- Despised
- Jacob
- Hunter
- Red
- Esau
- Isaac
- Stew

Ladder Hop

Questions
What was Jacob doing? Going on a a journey
What did Jacob do when he was tired? Went to sleep
What do you use a ladder for? To climb up to get to something
What did Jacob use as a pillow? A stone
As he slept what did Jacob do? He had a dream
Who uses a ladder? A builder, window cleaner, Dad etc
What did Jacob dream about? A stairway
Where did the stairway go? To Heaven
Who was walking up and down the stairs? Angels
Who was standing at the top of the stairs? God
What did God do when Jacob saw Him? He spoke to him
How did Jacob feel when he woke up? He was afraid
How do we get to Heaven? Trust in Jesus
What did Jesus do for us? Died on the cross

Caesar's Decree

Every person must travel to the place where they were born and report to the government officers in that city. The ruler of all the land, Caesar Augustus has ordered that every person do this. Everyone must obey this order. Caesar commands all people to be counted.

Do not disobey!

Caesar Augustus