

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS HEALS ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

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**📖 Matthew 8:1-4; John 4:46-54 Jesus heals a sick man**

**🎯 Aim: To discover that Jesus did not have favourites**

Today we are going to discover two stories in the Bible about people from very different backgrounds and look at the way Jesus treated them. Isolated from his friends and family, a desperate man with a painful skin disease came to be healed by Jesus. In total contrast, a royal official and adviser to the king came to Jesus desperate for his son to be healed. Jesus treated them both the same, and their lives were changed for ever.

Each child will need:

- Bible verse wristband
- A range of art and craft materials and paper – see Action It
- Pens/pencils and paper (optional) – see Pray It
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- *Favourite Things* handout – slips cut up, folded, and placed into a container
- Pens/pencils and paper (optional) – see Pray It

## Start It

Explain to the children that they will be answering the question, 'What is your favourite ...?' Take a *Favourite Things* slip out of the container to see how the question ends. (You do not have to use all 40 slips!)

**💬 Say:** It can be quite easy to share our favourite book, superhero or sport, but when we're talking about people it's a different story.

**Ask:** How might it feel if we thought that our teacher had a favourite member of the class? Would it make a difference if we were the favourite? If so, how?

**💬 Say:** In today's story we discover that Jesus didn't have favourites. He loved and cared for everyone in the same way.

## Sing It

Give each member of the group a memory verse wristband.

**💬 Say:** Our memory verse for this month reminds us God loves us so much that he sent Jesus. Let's read it together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

**💬 Say:** To help us memorise the verse, we are going to sing a song all about John 3:16.

**'John 3:16 (For God so Loved the World)'** by The Rizers (2:45)

# Tell It

**Say:** Today we are going to discover two stories in the Bible about people from very different backgrounds and look at the way Jesus treated them.

**Say:** First we are going to meet a man who had a skin condition called leprosy. In the time of Jesus, there were some illnesses that meant that you couldn't live and worship with your friends and family. In fact, the person had to keep away from everyone and became an outcast. There was no cure then for leprosy, and often people thought that the ill person had done something wrong to deserve their illness.

**Ask:** How do you think it felt to be isolated from friends and family for an illness that wasn't your fault?

**Say:** These days we know a lot more about illnesses and how they are caused, but in the time of Jesus things were different and people were often treated unfairly. Let's read the story from Matthew's Gospel to find out more.

**Read:**

**'When Jesus came down from the hill, great crowds followed him. Then a man sick with a harmful skin disease [leprosy] came to Jesus. The man bowed down before him and said, "Lord, you have the power to heal me if you want."**

**'Jesus touched the man and said, "I want to heal you. Be healed!" And immediately the man was healed from his skin disease. Then Jesus said to him, "Don't tell anyone about what happened. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer the gift that Moses commanded for people who are made well. This will show people that you are healed."**

— (Matthew 8:1-4 ICB)

**Discuss:**

→ How do we know that the man with the harmful skin disease had already heard about Jesus?

→ What do you think it felt like to be standing in front of someone who could take your illness away?

**Say:** The man came to Jesus believing he could be healed, but gave Jesus the choice. As soon as Jesus said, 'Be healed!', the skin condition disappeared.

**Ask:**

→ Why was this healing so important to the man?

→ What difference do you think it made to his everyday life?

**Say:** Jesus chose to heal a man that many people chose to ignore. In our next story we learn about a man that everyone in the town would have known. He was one of the king's important officials and his son was very poorly.

**Video**

**Jesus healed the official's son (John 4:46-54)** by Apollo Baptist (1:40)

**Discuss:**

→ Jesus had visited Cana before. What amazing miracle had he performed on his last visit?

→ What did the royal official do when he heard that Jesus was in the area?

→ What do you think Jesus meant when he said, 'You people must see signs and miracles before you will believe in me'?

**Say:** The royal official would not give up and kept asking Jesus to heal his son. On the way home the royal official discovered that his son had been healed right at the moment Jesus said he would be healed.

**Discuss:**

→ Think about the two characters we have met in our stories today.

→ How are they similar?

- How are they different?
- How did Jesus treat them both when they came and asked for help?

**Say:** Jesus treated both the outcast sick man and the important king's official equally. He loves us all the same and doesn't have favourites.

## Action It

**Say:** Our memory verse for this month is the perfect reminder that we are loved. Let's share it again together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

**Say:** Today you are going to create your own version of the memory verse and fill it with pictures and symbols that remind you that God loves everyone.

Give the children a range of drawing and craft material. Discuss ideas together about ways they could create a picture of the memory verse. They may decide to use a heart-shaped piece of paper or concertina the paper so that the memory verse is gradually revealed. It might be helpful to have a large version of the memory verse on display in case they can't remember it.

## Pray It

**Say:** On Tuesday 10 October it is World Mental Health Day. Across the globe people will be thinking about the importance of mental health and how we need to share our feelings, good and bad, with each other.

### Video

**Lucy's Blue Day – A children's mental health animated short** by Lucy's Blue Day

### Discuss

Watch the clip *Lucy's Blue Day* with the children and discuss the different emotions they recognise. What kinds of situations bring up these emotions?

Discuss how Lucy felt when her hair turned blue. How did the other children in the class react? What can we learn from this when we are supporting someone who is having a blue day? How did it feel for Lucy when she discovered that someone else felt the same way as her?

The children will have an opportunity to pray for people who are having lots of blue days. The discussion may also prompt them to share what it feels like when they have a blue day. The discussion and prayer will be led by your group and their experiences. You can write a prayer together as a group and read it together or give the children time to write their own prayers.

**Say:** We all have blue days, when we feel sad and things seem a little harder than normal. Today we are going to pray for all the people across the world who are struggling with a lot of blue days.

## Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



## JESUS HEALS ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE

Matthew 8:1-4; John 4:46-54 Jesus heals a sick man

🎯 Aim: To discover that Jesus did not have favourites

### FOR ME



#### Remember

Watch the clip to help you memorise this month's memory verse.

**Eureka! Remember Verse – John 3:16** by The Foundry Kids

### TOGETHER



#### Share

This week we shared our favourite things; we took slips of paper out of a container and asked, 'What's your favourite ...?' Create your own favourite things game and find out what the people at home like.



#### Song for the week

**'John 3:16 (For God so Loved the World)'**  
by The Rizers



#### Memory verse

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

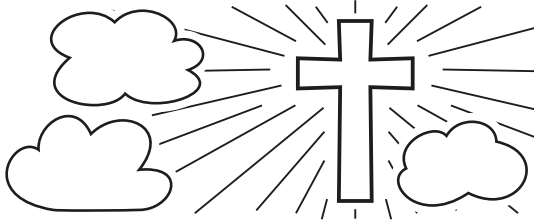
#### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

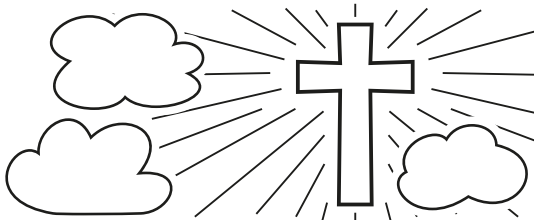
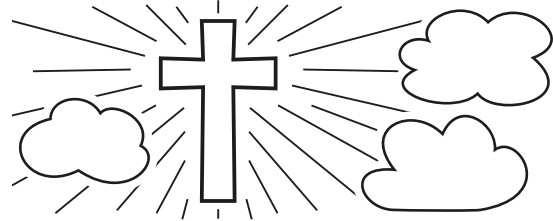
**Kids Alive!** The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!



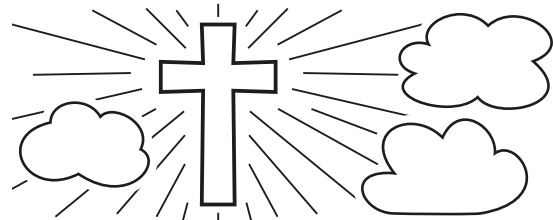
<b>colour</b>	<b>item of clothing</b>	<b>TV programme</b>	<b>shop</b>	<b>book character</b>
<b>drink</b>	<b>snack</b>	<b>subject in school</b>	<b>ice cream</b>	<b>dessert</b>
<b>take-away</b>	<b>chocolate bar</b>	<b>number</b>	<b>cartoon character</b>	<b>fruit</b>
<b>book</b>	<b>animal</b>	<b>season</b>	<b>superhero</b>	<b>Disney movie</b>
<b>film</b>	<b>band</b>	<b>smell</b>	<b>musical instrument</b>	<b>place you have been to</b>
<b>sport</b>	<b>memory</b>	<b>breakfast food</b>	<b>day of the week</b>	<b>way to travel</b>
<b>team</b>	<b>place</b>	<b>country</b>	<b>gift you've received</b>	<b>thing to do on your birthday</b>
<b>song</b>	<b>hobby</b>	<b>video game</b>	<b>way to have fun</b>	<b>toy</b>



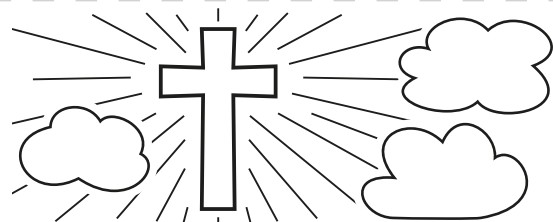
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(John 3:16)



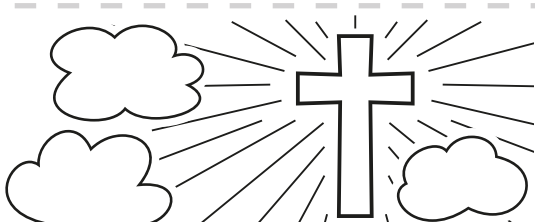
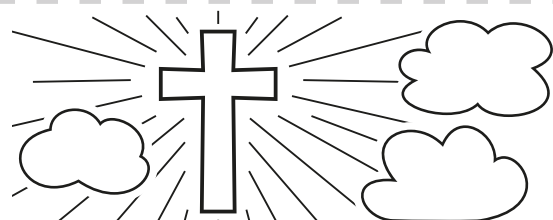
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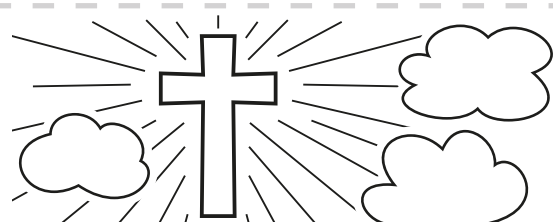
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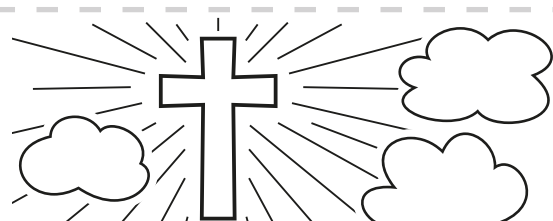
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# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS CONFUSES RELIGIOUS LEADERS

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**Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:21-24** Jesus heals a paralysed man

**Aim: To see that Jesus was not popular with everyone**

In today's story a group of friends do everything they can to bring a paralysed man to meet Jesus. They desperately want their friend to walk again. Jesus healed the man, and the crowd were amazed – but not everyone was impressed with Jesus that day. In today's session we'll discover why the religious leaders were angered by the actions of Jesus.

Each child will need:

- Card, hole puncher, string, scissors, two pipe cleaners, sticky tape or a tape easy to remove like washi or masking tape, pens/pencils
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- To watch ***Messy Church March 2021 – Craft 4 Paralysed Man*** by Finaghy Methodist (4:09)
- Prayer handout

## Start It

**Say:** This year The Salvation Army's International Development Week is 14-20 October, to celebrate its work across the globe.

Every answer in our starter quiz today is a place where The Salvation Army is currently at work, helping people to have a better standard of living.

Depending on your group you could give the children a multi-choice option for each question.

### Quiz: What country am I?

Adapted from [www.kidzworld.com/quiz/5545-quiz-what-country-am-i/](http://www.kidzworld.com/quiz/5545-quiz-what-country-am-i/)

1. It is the home of Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and Edinburgh Castle. **United Kingdom / Great Britain**
2. In this country people eat about 500g of rice a day and often greet each other by asking, 'Have you eaten?' **China**
3. It is shaped like a boot, and the capital city, which wasn't built in a day, is nicknamed Eternal City or the city of seven hills. **Italy**
4. The name of this country, whose national animal is the beaver, comes from a First Nations' word that means 'big village'. **Canada**
5. Peeps from this land down-under like to greet each other by saying, 'G'day mate!' **Australia**
6. This mountainous country is home to Machu Picchu, which is known as 'The Lost City of the Incas', and Paddington Bear. **Peru**
7. For 28 years a wall divided a city in this country into east and west, but it was torn down in 1989, and it is famous for Bratwurst sausages and Black Forest Gateau. **Germany**
8. This country is sometimes called the 'Giant of Africa' as it has Africa's largest population with at least 250 different languages, is rich in oil, and many people love eating spicy food including jollof rice. **Nigeria**



9. This is the largest country in the world, has deserts and frozen landscapes, Siberian tigers and wooden dolls that can be put inside each other. **Russia**
10. In this country most people are vegetarian, cows are treated respectfully and it has a Hollywood – except it's called Bollywood! **India**

Ask the children to recap all the countries mentioned in the quiz.

**Say:** Across the globe, in these countries and in many others, people in The Salvation Army are working hard to love God and love others.

## Sing It

**Say:** Our memory verse for this month reminds us that God loves everyone. Let's share it together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 *NIV*)

**Say:** Our song for today encourages us to be like Jesus and show the love of God to everyone we meet.

**'L-O-V-E'** by Compass Bible Church (2:24)

## Tell It

**Say:** In today's story Jesus miraculously heals a paralysed man. Loads of people in the crowd were amazed, which was brilliant, but they're not the ones we're going to focus on today. Let's watch the clip and find out who were unimpressed by the miracles of Jesus.

## Video

**God's Story: Jesus Heals a Man** by Crossroads Kids' Club (3:39)

**Watch:** 0:00 to 1:20. (Let's call this guy Matt, even though the Bible doesn't tell us his real name.)

## Discuss:

- What is a miracle?
- What other miracles did Jesus perform?
- Why do you think people were so desperate to spend time with Jesus?
- We have just been introduced to a man being carried by four of his friends on a mat. Do you know what happens next in the story? Share it with the rest of the group.

**Watch:** 1:21 to 3:07 (And that's the story of Jesus healing a guy.)

**Say:** The man's amazing friends lowered him down through the roof so that he could meet Jesus. His sins were forgiven, and he was healed.

**Ask:** Who wasn't happy about what had happened?

**Say:** In the book of Luke chapter five we can read more about the religious leaders and what they thought of Jesus.

## Read:

**'The Jewish teachers of the law and the Pharisees [scholars and community leaders] thought to themselves, "Who is this man? He is saying things that are against God! Only God can forgive sins."**

**'But Jesus knew what they were thinking. He said, "Why do you have thoughts like that in your hearts? Which is easier: to tell this paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," or to tell him, "Stand up and walk"? But I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.'" So Jesus said to the paralysed man, "I tell you, stand up! Take your mat and go home."**

— (Luke 5:21-24 *ICB*)

**Ask:** Why were the religious leaders so frustrated with Jesus?

**Say:** The religious leaders had never heard anyone talking like this before. In their eyes no one could forgive sins but God, and they didn't believe Jesus was God. To prove that he was the Son of God, Jesus healed the man. The people were amazed, but the religious leaders only became even more angry with him.

**Say:** Let's recap the story.

**Watch:** 3:08 to end.

## Action It

Explain to the children how to make a model of the paralysed man on a colourful stretcher based on the video: [Messy Church March 2021 – Craft 4 Paralyzed Man](#) (4:09)

You may wish to have the holes in the card already done and adapt the resources to include removable tape so children can show the man picking up his mat and walking.

Once the children have completed the craft activity, encourage them to retell the story to someone else in the group.

## Pray It

**Say:** The Salvation Army's International Development Week runs from 14 to 20 October. Many children in the world desperately need a safe place to live, support with their health and to learn more about Jesus. Today we have an opportunity to pray for children in each of the countries where The Salvation Army worships and works.

Display the following prayer for the children to use as a prompt. Encourage each child to think of a country to pray for and ask them to take turns reading out their prayer.

'Be with the children of (insert name of country).

We know you have the whole world in your hands.'

**Say:** As part of our prayer time, we are going to sing a song that reminds us that God has each and every one of us in his hands.

## Video

['He's got the Whole World in his Hands' – Maker Fun Factor Music Videos](#) by Lifetree Kids (stop clip at 2:00)

## Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

OCTOBER  
SESSION 02

## JESUS CONFUSES RELIGIOUS LEADERS

 Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:21-24 Jesus heals a paralysed man

🎯 Aim: To see that Jesus was not popular with everyone

### FOR ME



#### Discover

The Salvation Army's International Development Week is on 14-20 October. Try and discover as much as you can about the way that The Salvation Army helps children across the world. Share what you have discovered with the rest of your Explore It group.

### TOGETHER



#### Watch

Using the craft activity you made in this week's Explore It session, share the story of the paralysed man with the people at home.

Watch the clip together and discuss what you have discovered about Jesus and his power to heal people. How was the reaction of the religious leaders to Jesus different from that of the crowd?

**Jesus Heals the Paralytic** by Mx7.org uploaded by RodtheNey



#### Song for the week

**'L-O-V-E'** by Compass Bible Church



#### Memory verse

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

#### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

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**Be with the children of ...**

**We know you have the**

**whole world in your hands.**



Children  
& Youth

October 2023 session 2

*Explore It*

# Explore It FOR LEADERS



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## GETTING RID OF JESUS

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**📖 Matthew 12:1-2,8; 13:10-13; 15:1-2,10-14 Obey God's law, not men's**

**🎯 Aim: To know why the religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus**

Jesus continued to upset the religious leaders by bending and breaking the religious laws that they thought were important. He told stories that seemed like riddles to the Pharisees and he didn't appear to follow the Sabbath rules. In today's session we will discover more about how the religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus.

Each child will need:

- Four Parables handout (one parable per child)
- Pens/pencils and paper
- Explore It Ideas handout

### Start It

**Ask:**

- What is your favourite story?
- Why do you like it so much?

**💬 Say:** Watch the clip and see if you can guess the children's story from the emoji clues.

### Video

**Guess ... the Children's Book** by Guess ... (3:00)

**💬 Say:** Jesus used stories to teach the people who came to listen to him.

### Sing It

**💬 Say:** Our song for today is going to help us to memorise our verse for this month. Let's sing the song together and then share our memory verse.

**'John 3:16 – Eternal Life'** by Seeds Family Worship (3:02)

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

### Tell It

**💬 Say:** In our last session we discovered that not everyone was happy with what Jesus was doing. When Jesus forgave the sins of the paralysed man, the religious leaders questioned why he thought he could do that. After all, only God can forgive sins. They were also frustrated with Jesus because he didn't follow the rules in the same way they did.

**Ask:** Do you always wash your hands before you eat?

**Say:** In the time of Jesus, washing your hands before eating wasn't just important for hygiene reasons, it was also part of Jewish Law – and you had to do it a particular way. Our story for today starts with a grumpy group of religious leaders who were unhappy with the disciples' hand-washing habits.

**Read:**

**'Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem. They asked him, "Why do your followers not obey the rules given to us by the great people who lived before us? Your followers don't wash their hands before they eat!"'**

— (Matthew 15:1-2 *ICB*)

**Say:** The Pharisees were always trying to catch Jesus out, but each time they tried, he used it as an opportunity to teach the people that were listening. To do this, Jesus often used parables.

**Ask:** What is a parable?

**Say:** Let's watch the clip to find out more.

## Video

**What is a parable? Bible Answers for Kids** by Maranatha Chapel Kids (0:46)

**Say:** The clip describes a parable as a simple story with an important message. Sometimes the important message can seem easy to find, and sometimes the message means different things to different people, and sometimes the message can develop the more you think about it.

**Say:** When the Pharisees, the scholars and community leaders questioned Jesus, he told them two simple stories with an important message. Here is the first one.

**Read:**

**'Jesus called the crowd to him. He said, "Listen and understand what I am saying. It is not what a person puts into his mouth that makes him unclean. It is what comes out of his mouth that makes him unclean."'**

— (Matthew 15:10-11 *ICB*)

**Ask:** What do you think Jesus was trying to teach the people through this parable?

**Say:** In the second parable, Jesus warned the people listening about the Pharisees.

**Read:**

**'Stay away from the Pharisees. They are blind leaders. And if a blind man leads another blind man, then both men will fall into a ditch.'**

— (Matthew 15:14 *ICB*)

**Ask:** What do you think Jesus was trying to teach the people through this parable?

**Say:** On a different occasion, the Pharisees tried to catch out Jesus and his disciples.

**Read:**

**'About that same time, Jesus was walking through some fields of grain on a Sabbath day. His followers were with him, and they were hungry. So they began to pick the grain and eat it. The Pharisees saw this, and they said to Jesus, "Look! Your followers are doing something that is against the Jewish law to do on the Sabbath day."'**

— (Matthew 12:1-2 *ICB*)

**'[Jesus replied,] The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath day.'**

— (Matthew 12:8 *ICB*)

**Ask:** Why were the Pharisees annoyed with Jesus and his disciples?

**Say:** Jesus continued to do things in a way that the Pharisees did not like. They believed he was going against God, when in fact he was the Son of God. Their anger at his actions increased the more Jesus broke their special rules.

## Action It

**Say:** Jesus loved to tell the people parables to help them understand his teaching. His followers wanted to know why he did this.

### Read:

**'The followers came to Jesus and asked, "Why do you use stories to teach the people?"**

**'Jesus answered, "Only you can know the secret truths about the kingdom of heaven. Other people cannot know these secret truths. The person who has something will be given more. And he will have all he needs. But the person who does not have much, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I use stories to teach the people: they see, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really understand."'**

— (Matthew 13:10-13 ICB)

**Say:** Today you will get the opportunity to discover more about the stories Jesus told and see if you can discover their simple truth.

### Four parables

Explain to the children that they will each be focusing on one parable from Matthew 13. There is space to create a picture of the parable and a sentence to complete: 'I think the simple truth of this parable is ...'

You may need to support some children with the reading and understanding. Encourage the children to have their own thoughts about the parables – that there is no 'right or wrong' answer, but only what the parable has revealed to them.

When the children have completed their parable exploration, they can share their work with the rest of the group. This should give you an opportunity to explore the different messages Jesus communicated through the parables he taught.

## Pray It

**Say:** In today's session the Pharisees were unhappy because Jesus wasn't following the ritual rules of the Sabbath, their holy day. These days we can forget that God gave the Sabbath, our Sunday, to rest after a busy week. For our prayer time today, we are going to take the opportunity to rest.

The length of this activity will depend on your group. Ask the children to find a space to lie down or relax. As they listen to the music, they can close their eyes and spend time with Jesus. When the group becomes restless you can fade the music and then bring the session to a close in prayer.

### Listen

**'God so Loved' – Hidden In My Heart Volume III** by Scripture Lullabies (5:21)

## Explore It

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## IDEAS

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### GETTING RID OF JESUS

📖 Matthew 12:1-2,8; 13:10-13; 15:1-2,10-14 Obey God's law, not men's

🎯 Aim: To know why the religious leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus

### FOR ME



#### Read

This week we discovered more about lots of different parables in Matthew 13. Read the whole chapter to explore the simple truths Jesus wanted to share with the people.

### TOGETHER



#### Rest

How good are the people at home at taking a moment to rest?

Ask them to spare five minutes to take some moments to relax and listen to a Scripture Lullaby with you.

**'God so Loved' – Hidden In My Heart Volume III** by Scripture Lullabies



#### Song for the week

**'John 3:16 – Eternal Life'** by Seeds Family Worship



#### Memory verse

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

#### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

**Kids Alive!** The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!





# A story about planting seeds

'Then Jesus used stories to teach them many things. He said: "A farmer went out to plant his seed. While he was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. Some seed fell on rocky ground, where there wasn't enough soil. That seed grew very fast, because the ground was not deep. But when the sun rose, the plants dried up because they did not have deep roots. Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. Some other seed fell on good ground where it grew and became grain. Some plants made 100 times more grain. Other plants made 60 times more grain, and some made 30 times more grain. You people who hear me, listen!"

(Matthew 13:3-9 /CB)

I think the simple truth of this parable is

*Explore It*

OCTOBER 2023 – SESSION 3 FOUR PARABLES



Youth and  
Children's  
Ministries

# A story about wheat and weeds

'Then Jesus told them another story. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who planted good seed in his field. That night, when everyone was asleep, his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. Then the enemy went away. Later, the wheat grew and heads of grain grew on the wheat plants. But at the same time the weeds also grew. Then the man's servants came to him and said, 'You planted good seed in your field. Where did the weeds come from?' The man answered, 'An enemy planted weeds.' The servants asked, 'Do you want us to pull up the weeds?' The man answered, 'No, because when you pull up the weeds, you might also pull up the wheat. Let the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest time. At harvest time I will tell the workers this: first gather the weeds and tie them together to be burned. Then gather the wheat and bring it to my barn.'"

(Matthew 13:24-30 *ICB*)

I think the simple truth of this parable is

# Stories of mustard seed and yeast

'Then Jesus told another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed. A man plants the seed in his field. That seed is the smallest of all seeds. But when it grows, it is one of the largest garden plants. It becomes a tree, big enough for the wild birds to come and make nests in its branches."

'Then Jesus told another story: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman mixes into a big bowl of flour. The yeast makes all the dough rise."

(Matthew 13:31-33 *ICB*)

I think the simple truth of this parable is

# Stories of a treasure and a pearl

'The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. One day a man found the treasure, and then he hid it in the field again. The man was very happy to find the treasure. He went and sold everything that he owned to buy that field.

'Also, the kingdom of heaven is like a man looking for fine pearls. One day he found a very valuable pearl. The man went and sold everything he had to buy that pearl.'

(Matthew 13:44-46 ICB)

I think the simple truth of this parable is

*Explore It*

OCTOBER 2023 – SESSION 3 FOUR PARABLES



Youth and  
Children's  
Ministries

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### JESUS FORGIVES SIN

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📖 **Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 7:36-39,44-48**

🎯 **Aim: To become aware of things we know that are wrong**

Jesus often got into trouble with the religious leaders for spending time with people who they thought were the wrong sort. In today's stories Jesus invited a hated tax collector to follow him, and he showed love and kindness to a desperate woman. Our session today reminds us of the love of Jesus and how he is willing to forgive us whenever we make a mistake.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- A heart-shaped piece of paper (optional) – see Pray It
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- A blindfold and a selection of items to smell, eg vinegar, perfume, lemons, tomato ketchup, coffee, mints, washing-up liquid, Coca-cola, pickled onions, oranges
- A selection of *Kids Alive!* magazines

## Start It

Set up a 'Guess the smell' activity. Can the children guess what they are smelling, without looking at the items (use a blindfold)?

**Ask:** What was your most/least favourite smell out of all the fragrances in the game?

💬 **Say:** In our story today, a woman brings a beautiful smelling perfume to Jesus and pours it over his feet. The room must have smelt amazing! (John 12:3 says the sweet smell 'filled the whole house'.) We'll find out more later in our session.

## Sing It

💬 **Say:** Throughout this month our memory verse has helped us to focus on God's amazing love for us. Let's share our memory verse together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

💬 **Say:** Our song for today reminds us how wide, high, long and deep the love of God is and how he is always with us.

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

## Tell It

💬 **Say:** Jesus had a habit of spending time with people that were looked down on and rejected. Today we will discover two people who met with Jesus and were treated with respect. Both had done many things wrong, but Jesus forgave them.

### Ask:

- What do you know about the Ancient Romans?
- Do you know how they usually conquered a city? (*They would surround the city walls and attack them with catapults and battering rams. They would do surprise attacks and stop people from leaving. And if all else failed, they would negotiate.*)
- Do you know what happened to the people that lived in that city? (*They could keep their own way of living, their own culture. But they had to obey Roman laws and pay taxes. The Romans shared their methods of improving life, eg with roads, sanitation and plumbing.*)

**Say:** The Romans had taken over many of the towns where the Jewish people lived. They had to pay a lot of taxes to the Romans, and the Jewish people were not happy about this. In our story today we meet Matthew. Although Matthew was Jewish, he collected taxes from his fellow people to give to the Romans.

**Ask:** What do you think the Jewish people thought about what Matthew did for a job?

**Say:** Matthew was not a popular person. Let's hear more about his story.

### Read:

**'When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew. Matthew was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." And Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.'**

**'Jesus had dinner at Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with Jesus and his followers. The Pharisees saw this and asked Jesus' followers, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"'**

**'Jesus heard the Pharisees ask this. So he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor. Only the sick need a doctor. Go and learn what this means: 'I want faithful love more than I want animal sacrifices.' I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners.'"**

— (Matthew 9:9-13 ICB)

### Ask:

- What did the Pharisees think about Jesus spending time with Matthew?
- Do you think Jesus was bothered that Matthew was a tax collector? Explain your answer.
- How did Jesus show his love for Matthew?

**Say:** Matthew followed Jesus and his life changed for ever. This was all because Jesus saw past any mistake Matthew had made and loved him.

**Say:** In our second story, we meet a woman who had also made a lot of mistakes. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened when she met Jesus.

## Video

[Jesus and the Sinful Woman](#) by Saddleback Kids (3:15)

### Discuss:

- Why do you think the sinful woman wanted to be near Jesus? How did she show her love for him?
- How did Simon react to her arrival? Why do you think he was so unkind?
- Why was Simon surprised that Jesus wanted to spend time with the sinful woman?
- Do you think Simon thought he was better than the woman? If so, in what way?
- Jesus told Simon a parable. What was the simple truth hidden in the story?
- What differences did Jesus point out between Simon's behaviour and the woman's actions?

**Say:** Jesus forgave her sins, but Simon would not even touch anyone who was considered a 'sinner'. The woman had done many wrong things in her life, but was more grateful to Jesus than Simon had been. Jesus changed her life and she wanted to say thank you and show how much she loved him.

## Action It

Ask the children to imagine that they have been asked to create a comic strip Bible story for the back page of *Kids Alive!*. Show them some examples to remind them how the comic strip is presented. They can choose one of the stories from today's session:

- Jesus and the Tax Collector – Matthew 9:9-13
- The woman and the perfume – Luke 7:36-39,44-48

Give the children time to create their own comic strip of their chosen story and share it with the rest of the group.

## Pray It

**💬 Say:** Throughout this month's *Explore It* sessions we have seen Jesus show love to people that others chose to ignore. God sent Jesus to show them just how much they are loved. That includes you and me. Our memory verse reminds us just how much God loves us. Let's share it together.

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

— (John 3:16 NIV)

Explain to the children that the woman in the story wanted to show her love for Jesus.

### Discuss

Discuss how the way in which Jesus had forgiven her, had made her love Jesus even more.

Ask the children to think about and discuss the following questions:

- What do you understand by the word 'sinner'?
- Are you aware of the things you do which are wrong? Do you ever try and put them right?

Explain to the children that, just like Matthew and the woman, we can ask God for forgiveness when we do something wrong. If appropriate, give the children the opportunity to do this.

Give each child a heart-shaped piece of paper. On the paper ask the children to write a thank you prayer to Jesus and then share them together as a group.

If required you can play our 'Sing It' song for today as the children write their prayers.

### Listen

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by Ellie Holcomb (3:19)

## Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

OCTOBER  
SESSION 04

### JESUS FORGIVES SIN

📖 Matthew 9:9-13; Luke 7:36-39,44-48

🎯 Aim: To become aware of things we know that are wrong

## FOR ME



### Discover

This week's Bible story was filled with a beautiful fragrance poured on to Jesus' feet.

What is your favourite smell? Why do you like it so much?

Watch the clip to discover the amazing way God created your nose to smell all your favourite fragrances.

**How Your Nose Works? – The Dr Binocs Show**  
by Peekaboo Kidz: watch until 4.22

## TOGETHER



### Share

In this week's *Explore It* session you created a comic strip version of Jesus meeting either Matthew the tax collector, or the woman with the perfume. Retell the story to someone at home and remind them of the amazing gift of forgiveness Jesus gives to each one of us.



### Song for the week

**'Wide, High, Long, Deep'** by  
Ellie Holcomb (3:19)



### Memory verse

**'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.'**

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