

Jesus seeks safety



Verse:

Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:1-15
Wise men come to visit Jesus



Aim:

To see migration in Jesus' own story



In today's session we will think about the characters in the Christmas story who travelled to new places.

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem as they need to take part in the census. The wise men travel to meet Jesus and bring him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In this session we will think about what gifts we can bring to Jesus.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- Coloured or patterned paper 20cm by 20cm, a glue stick, a small slip of paper and a pen
- **A Covenant Sunday C&Y card** (optional)
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- Memory verse poster
- A flip chart and pens
- To watch **DIY: Mini box** by Ventuni Art (1:10)
- You may wish to provide an opportunity for children to complete a **Covenant Sunday C&Y card** (optional)



Start it

Ask:

- What is the favourite gift you have ever received for Christmas? Why is it your favourite?
- What is the favourite gift that you have given to someone else for Christmas? Why is it your favourite?

- Are there any gifts you asked for this year that you have already stopped playing with or using? Why is that?
- If you could ask for any gift today, then what would it be? Explain why.

Say:

In our story today the wise men brought precious gifts to the baby Jesus. Rather than bringing cuddly toys or a rattle, they brought gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Ask:

Did any of you put gold, frankincense or myrrh on your Christmas list? If not, why not?

Say:

We'll find out more about the gifts from the wise men later on.



Sing it

Say:

Our song for today is a fun version of the Christmas carol 'We three kings' from the animated film *The Star*.

Song

'We three kings' by Kirk Franklin, Sony Pictures Animation
(3:48)



Tell it

Say:

The sixth day of January is also known as Three Kings' Day. Some churches hold a feast or festival called Epiphany, celebrating the wise men visiting Jesus. Before we think about the journey of the wise men, let's focus on Mary and Joseph and all the travelling they had to do prior to Jesus' birth.

Read:

'At that time, Augustus Caesar sent an order to all people in the countries that were under Roman rule. The order said that they must list their names in a register. This was the first registration taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own towns to be registered.'

'So Joseph left Nazareth, a town in Galilee. He went to the town of Bethlehem in Judea. This town was known as the town of David. Joseph went there because he was from the family of David. Joseph registered with Mary because she was engaged to marry him.'

(Mary was now pregnant.) While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have the baby. She gave birth to her first son. There were no rooms left in the inn. So she wrapped the baby with cloths and laid him in a box where animals are fed.'

(Luke 2:1-7 ICB)

Say:

The journey to Bethlehem is thought to have taken at least a week. Although the Bible doesn't mention how they travelled there, it would have taken a lot longer than it would today.

Ask:

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt as they travelled all that way to Bethlehem?

Say:

At a time when they probably wanted to stay at home and prepare for the birth of their baby, Mary and Joseph had to go to a new place. As Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the wise men began their journey to meet the newborn king.

Read:

'Jesus was born in the town of Bethlehem in Judea during the time when Herod was king. After Jesus was born, some wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. They asked, "Where is the baby who was born to be the king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east. We came to worship him."

'When King Herod heard about this new king of the Jews, he was troubled. And all the people in Jerusalem were worried too. Herod called a meeting of all the leading priests and teachers of the law. He asked them where the Christ would be born. They answered, "In the town of Bethlehem in Judea. The prophet wrote about this in the Scriptures:

**'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
you are important among the rulers of Judah.
A ruler will come from you.
He will be like a shepherd for my people, the Israelites.'**

'Then Herod had a secret meeting with the wise men from the east. He learned from them the exact time they first saw the star. Then Herod sent the wise men to Bethlehem. He said to them, "Go and look carefully to find the child. When you find him, come and tell me. Then I can go and worship him too."

'The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was.'

(Matthew 2:1-9 ICB)

Ask:

- What do you think it was like for the wise men to travel all that way to find Jesus?
- Would you have been willing to join their group with only a star to guide the way? If not, why not?

Read:

‘When the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped the child. They opened the gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.’

(Matthew 2:10-11 /CB)

Say:

The wise men travelled many miles to meet Jesus and brought him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

- The gold represented Jesus as the newborn king
- The frankincense released a fragrance that was used for worship in the Temple
- The myrrh was used to heal wounds and was offered to Jesus again when he died on the cross

Say:

All of the gifts told a story of the importance of this baby boy. Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem and stayed there for a while. The wise men travelled a long way to a new land to meet Jesus.

Ask:

Do you know anyone who has travelled to a new city or country to live? Where did they go?

Say:

People often move to new cities or countries to learn more about them, to start a new job, or to experience living in a new place. This is called migration.

Say:

Throughout our sessions this month we will be thinking about migration, people moving to live in new countries. Many people who migrate bring their own customs and traditions to their new homes. Epiphany is celebrated differently across the world. Think about this question as you watch the clip.

Ask:

If you could travel to one of the locations mentioned in the clip, where would it be and how would you celebrate Epiphany there?

Video

Epiphany around the world for kids! by Twinkl! South Africa (2:30)

Action it

Say:

The wise men brought precious gifts to Jesus to celebrate his birth. We may not be able to give gold, frankincense and myrrh, but there are lots of things we have to offer Jesus as a gift.

Ask:

What kind of gifts can we bring to Jesus?

As the children to suggest ideas, and write them up on a flip chart so that they can refer to them later.

Covenant Sunday

Say:

7 January this year is a special day for The Salvation Army; it is called Covenant Sunday. A covenant is a relationship between God and us in which we make binding promises to each other. Covenant Sunday is a day for renewing promises, committing ourselves to God, and remembering his covenant with us. Just like the wise men, we can bring gifts to Jesus throughout this new year.

You may wish to provide an opportunity for children to complete their **Covenant Sunday 2024 C&Y card**.

Craft

Show the children how to make a mini gift box to take home with them. You may wish to share the video with them.

Video

DIY: Mini box by Ventuni Art (1:10)

After the boxes are made, give each child a small slip of paper to write down one gift they can give to Jesus as they start the new year. The paper can be placed inside the box and *Explore it ideas* will build on this.

When the children have completed their box, ask them to share with the group the gift they are giving to Jesus.



Pray it

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that no matter where we come from, or who we are, we are all one in Jesus. Let's read it together.

Display the memory verse and read it through together. Give each child a memory verse wristband to take home. Encourage the children to colour the hands in a variety of colours.

Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

Ask:

- What does our memory verse teach us about the different people we meet every day?
- How does Jesus see them?
- How should we treat people who have come to live in our country from another place?

Introduce the song 'Neither Jew nor Greek'. It will be used as part of the prayer time for each session.

Video

'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28 by I Believe (1:05)

After the song has finished, pray for those who have come to our country from another place, and ask God for guidance to treat people with love and respect. In future weeks the prayer focus will be more specific for those living as refugees in the UK and abroad, but for today the aim is to encourage the children to think about difference and how we are all one in Christ.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)

Jesus seeks safety

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Verse:

Luke 2:1-7; Matthew 2:1-15
Wise men come to visit Jesus



Aim:

To see migration in Jesus' own story



Pray

Take a moment each day to read the slip of paper in your gift box. Ask Jesus to help you use your gifts for him. Jot down moments where you have used your gift for Jesus.



Share

Show the people at home the gift box that you made and share with them the gift you offered to give Jesus this year.

What opportunities are there for you to use your gift at home?

Encourage others at home to think of a gift that they could offer to Jesus. If you would like to show them how to make their own mini giftbox, then watch the video below.

DIY: *Mini box* by Ventuni Art



Song for the week

'We three kings' by Kirk Franklin, *The Star*
Sony Pictures Animation



Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

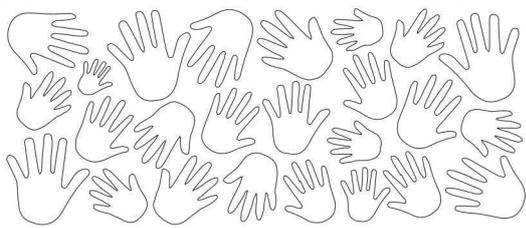
(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

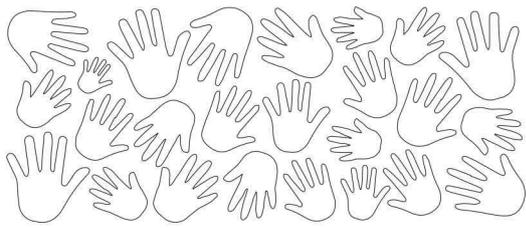
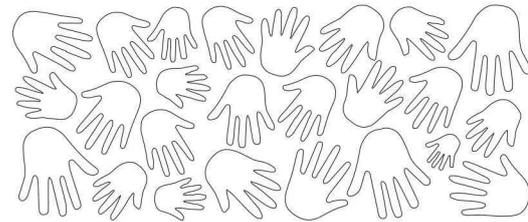
Explore it

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there is neither slave nor free,
there is no male and female,
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.’**

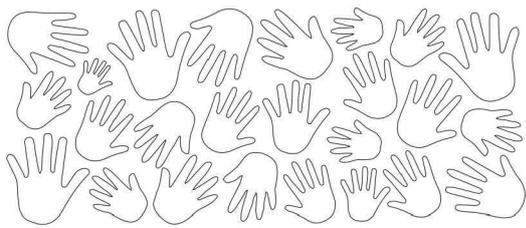
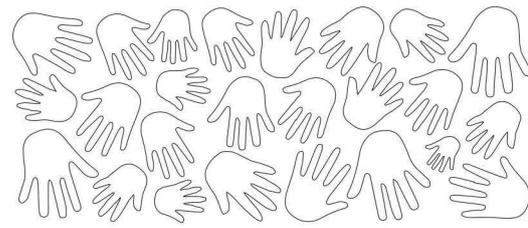
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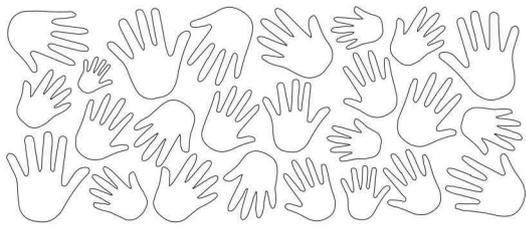
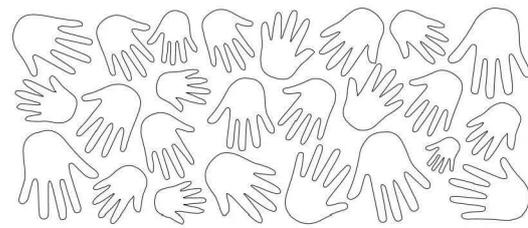
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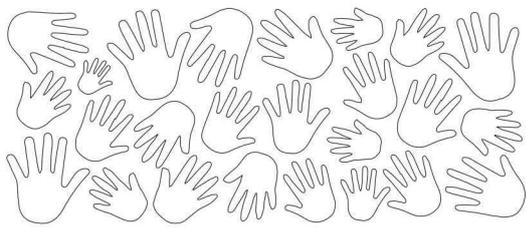
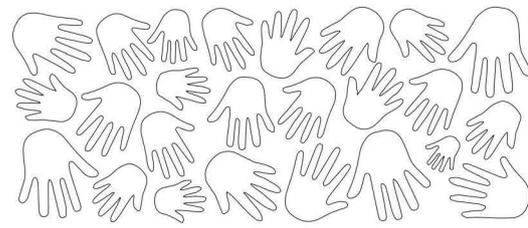
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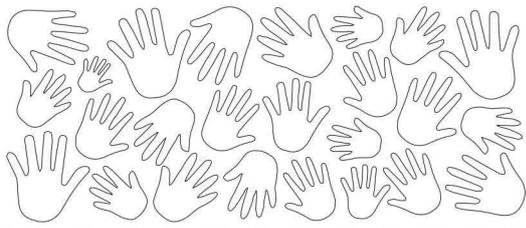
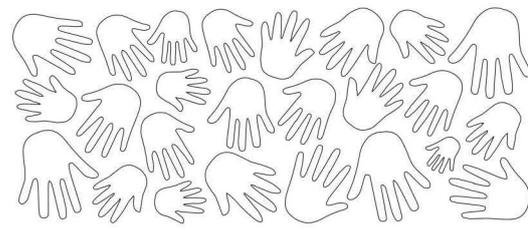
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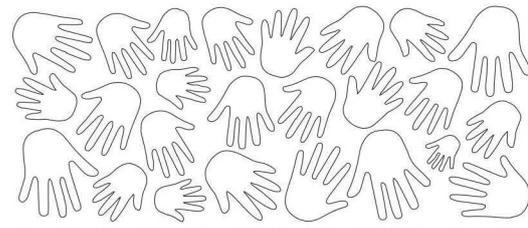
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Herod responds to another ruler



Verse:

Matthew 2:9-15

Jesus' parents take him to Egypt



Aim:

To explore our feelings towards refugees



In today's session we'll think about what it feels like to be a refugee, leaving home to find safety in a new place.

Just like many families in the world today, Mary and Joseph made the difficult decision to move to a different country to find safety. Jesus and his family faced an uncertain future, all because of the anger and jealousy of a scared king.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- To be familiar with information on migration and refugees: see **Migration and Refugees** by BBC Bitesize



Start it

Give each child a piece of paper and some pens/pencils. Ask them to imagine they are king or queen for the day. Give them five minutes to draw themselves as royalty. It's up to them what they are wearing, where they are and what they are doing. After they have completed their drawings, share them together and discuss the following questions.

Ask:

- If you could be king or queen for a day, what would you do?
- What kind of ruler would you be over your people? How would you treat them?
- How would you react if one of them disobeyed your rules?
- How would you react if you heard there was a new king or queen in town?

Say:

Having the power to rule over other people can be used in a positive way to make their lives better. Sometimes people use their power to make their own lives better but don't think about how their actions impact others. Today we'll discover more about a member of a royal family who used their power to cause a lot of harm.

Sing it

Say:

In today's story Joseph has to trust God to guide him and keep his family safe. We're going to sing a song that reminds us to trust God even when we're uncertain what the future may look like.

Song

'I'm trusting you' by Roar VBS, Lifetree Kids (3:23)

Tell it

Say:

Last week we discovered how the wise men travelled to worship baby Jesus and brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. But there was one important character we never mentioned.

Ask:

Which important character did we forget to mention last week?

If the children are struggling to guess, then give them clues that lead to the answer – King Herod.

Say:

Let's recap the story from last week and find out the part that King Herod had to play.

Video

The story of Christmas (Jesus and the wise men) by Saddleback Kids (3:30)

Ask:

- How did King Herod react to the news that there was a new king in town?
- Why do you think he reacted this way?
- What did King Herod ask the wise men to do once they had met Jesus?

Read:

'The wise men heard the king and then left. They saw the same star they had seen in the east. It went before them until it stopped above the place where the child was. When

the wise men saw the star, they were filled with joy. They went to the house where the child was and saw him with his mother, Mary. They bowed down and worshipped the child. They opened the gifts they had brought for him. They gave him treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. But God warned the wise men in a dream not to go back to Herod. So they went home to their own country by a different way.'

(Matthew 2:9-12 *ICB*)

Say:

Listening to God's warning, the wise men travelled back to their home because it was safe for them to go there. They were visitors in a new country and, despite fears that King Herod would be angry with them, they were able to return safely to their own home. The same could not be said for Jesus and his family.

Read:

'After they left, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. The angel said, "Get up! Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Herod will start looking for the child to kill him. Stay in Egypt until I tell you to return."'

(Matthew 2:13 *ICB*)

Ask:

- Why did Mary, Joseph and Jesus have to leave their home?
- How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when they discovered that Jesus was in danger?
- What do you think it felt like to have to gather up all their things and go to a strange country?

Say:

Due to the threats King Herod made, Jesus and his family were in danger. If they stayed where they were, it would cost them their lives. They had no choice but to leave and go to Egypt, far away from their own home. God told them to stay in Egypt until he said it was safe to return, but they had no idea how long that would be.

Ask:

Have you heard the words 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker'? What do you think they mean?

Say:

When people have to leave an area, they are sometimes known as 'refugees' or 'asylum seekers'. This is because 'refuge' and 'asylum' are words to describe 'safety' and 'protection'.

Ask:

Thinking about the meaning of the words 'refugee' or 'asylum seeker', is this how you would describe Jesus and his family when they fled to Egypt? If so, why?

Say:

Jesus and his family had to stay in Egypt until King Herod died.

Read:

‘So Joseph got up and left for Egypt during the night with the child and his mother. Joseph stayed in Egypt until Herod died. This was to make clear the full meaning of what the Lord had said through the prophet. The Lord said, “I called my son out of Egypt.”’

(Matthew 2:14-15 *ICB*)

Action it

Prompt some discussion in the group about our feelings towards refugees. This is a challenging topic, but it could prompt some useful discussions and clarify misunderstandings about people who seek refuge in our country.

Rather than setting a list of prescribed questions, use the video clip to help explain migration and refugees. It is written from the perspective of someone from Wales, but it applies to all nations across the UK and Ireland. A range of information is provided on the page available for discussion. Be guided by your group during this activity, using the questions below as a prompt if necessary.

Video

Migration and refugees by BBC Bitesize (1:30)

Possible questions

- What do you think it might feel like to leave home to go and live in another country?
- How are refugees welcomed in the UK and Ireland?
- Why do you think some people are unkind to refugees?
- Herod was angry that there was a ‘new ruler’ on his patch, but how would you react if someone new came into your class?
- In what ways can new people sometimes seem a threat to us?
- How can we view new people joining our communities as a positive thing?
- What positive contribution do refugees make to our communities?

Pray it

Say:

Today we have thought about the many people in our country who have had to leave their homes to escape danger. It must be so scary to move away from the people and places that are familiar. Those who come to the United Kingdom and Ireland to find refuge are not always treated with kindness. As Christians, we need to set a good example about how to treat refugees the way Jesus would want us to.

Say:

We're going to take some time to pray for those in our communities who are refugees. We are also going to ask God to give us guidance to treat people with love and respect.

Say:

Our memory verse for this month reminds us that we are all one in Christ. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

Say:

Before we spend time praying together, we're going to sing our memory verse song.

Video

'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28 by I Believe (1:05)

Encourage the children to keep praying for families who have had to leave their homes to find a safe place to live. Ask the group for suggestions about what they could pray for. Encourage the children to use the suggestions to pray for refugees. A prayer is provided, to bring the session to a close.

Prayer

Dear God,

Help us to remember that your own Son was once a refugee. He had to leave his home to find safety in another country with his Mum Mary, and Dad Joseph. We don't know how Jesus and his family were treated by the people of Egypt. We do know that, as he grew up, Jesus taught us to love others and care for them. Help us to treat refugees that we meet with the same love and respect that Jesus would.

Amen.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



Explore It is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaueivew)

Herod responds to another ruler

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Verse:

Matthew 2:9-15

Jesus' parents take him to Egypt



Aim:

To explore our feelings towards refugees



Pray

In our *Explore it* session, we spent time praying for families that have had to leave their homes to find safety. Take time each day this week to pray for all the refugees currently living in the UK and Ireland. You might want to listen to our memory verse song during your prayer times.

'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28 by I Believe



Share

Watch the clip with someone at home and discuss the questions raised in the story.

My name is not Refugee Children's books read aloud by The StoryTime Family



Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 ESV)



Song for the week

'I'm trusting you' by Roar VBS, Lifetree Kids

**LIVING
OUT FAITH**

Jesus is friends with everyone



Verse:

John 4:5-11, 13-15, 25-26, 39-42
Jesus and a Samaritan woman



Aim:

To see how Jesus accepts a Samaritan woman



In today's session we see Jesus giving us the perfect example of how to treat others with respect.

Traditionally Jews and Samaritans were sworn enemies, and yet Jesus took the time to respect and love a Samaritan woman gathering water at the well. Looking at this story, we will learn what it means to accept and love others regardless of their race or background.

Each child will need:

- Two paper bowls, white card, felt-tip pens (especially blue and two shades of brown), glue, scissors, a sharp pencil, blue string or wool, a blue bendy straw and sticky tape
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- To watch ***Rebekah at the well - Isaac and Rebecca - Sunday School Crafts - Bible Crafts*** by Kelly Hahn (1:17)
- A sharp tool to make holes in the paper bowls



Start it

Say:

Over the past few weeks we have been thinking about what it feels like to come from another country to live in the UK or Ireland.

Ask:

What are some of the reasons that people leave their own country to live in a new place?



Ask:

Can you think of a very well-known bear who left his home in Peru to come and live in London? What's his name?

Say:

Paddington Bear came to London to start a new life and the Brown family took him in and cared for him. But not everyone was quite as welcoming as the Brown family.

Video

Paddington Trailer 1 (2014) by Rotten Tomatoes (2:30)

Discuss:

- How did Mr Brown react to Paddington when he first saw him? Why do you think that was?
- Rather than giving Paddington a new name, do you think it would have been better for the Brown family to learn how to say his name in bear language? If so, why?
- Name some of the things that were new to Paddington at the Brown family house.
- How did Mr Brown feel about Paddington by the end of the film? Why do you think his opinion changed?

Say:

When Mr Brown first met Paddington, he made lots of assumptions about the kind of bear he was, without getting to know him. His opinion of Paddington changed when he put aside his ideas about Paddington and got to know him more.



Sing it

Say:

In today's story we see Jesus showing his love for a Samaritan woman and setting an example of how we should love others. This song reminds us that Jesus loves everyone, everywhere.

Song

'Everyone, everywhere' - Early Years - February (2022) by IES Kids Church (2:48)



Tell it

Say:

Whenever we are unsure how to act in a situation, we can always look to Jesus and think about the way he would respond. In today's story Jesus met a Samaritan woman collecting water from a well. Now this might not seem like a big deal to us today, but it was a huge deal at the

time of Jesus. At that time, women rarely talked to men that they did not know, and Jews like Jesus were meant to have nothing to do with Samaritans like the woman. Let's turn to the book of John to find out more about this story.

Read:

'In Samaria Jesus came to the town called Sychar. This town is near the field that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his long trip. So he sat down beside the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to the well to get some water. Jesus said to her, "Please give me a drink." (This happened while Jesus' followers were in town buying some food.)

'The woman said, "I am surprised that you ask me for a drink. You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan." (Jews are not friends with Samaritans.)

'Jesus said, "You don't know what God gives. And you don't know who asked you for a drink. If you knew, you would have asked me, and I would have given you living water."

'The woman said, "Sir, where will you get that living water? The well is very deep, and you have nothing to get water with.'"

(John 4:5-11 *ICB*)

Watch the following clip with the group and use the follow-up questions to prompt discussion.

Video

Woman at the well - Let's Go by Crossroads Kids' Club

Watch: 00:00 to 3:28 'He was kind to her, he was honest with her and he showed her love.'

Discuss

- How did the Jews feel about the Samaritans?
- How did Jesus feel about the Samaritan woman?
- Why was the woman so confused by the way Jesus was acting?
- What kind of water did Jesus offer to the Samaritan woman?
- What unexpected thing did Jesus say to the Samaritan woman?
- How did Jesus describe himself?

Say:

Jesus ignored the fact that he was talking to a woman who was a Samaritan and had made many mistakes in her life. He loved her regardless of who she was. Jesus didn't care about any of those things. He loved the Samaritan woman, just like he loves us.

Ask:

- How do you think the Samaritan woman felt as she went back to her home town after meeting Jesus?

- How can we treat others in the same way Jesus did?

Say:

When people spent time with Jesus, he filled their lives with hope. Jesus wants us to treat people with the same love and respect that he showed to the Samaritan woman. When we show the love of Jesus to people, regardless of their background, they will want to show that love to others. Just look what happened with the Samaritan woman: she couldn't wait to tell everyone about meeting Jesus.

Read:

'Many of the Samaritans in that town believed in Jesus. They believed because of what the woman said: "He told me everything I have ever done." The Samaritans came to Jesus and begged him to stay with them. So he stayed there two days. Many more believed because of the things he said.

'They said to the woman, "First we believed in Jesus because of what you told us. But now we believe because we heard him ourselves. We know that this man really is the Saviour of the world.'"

(John 4:39-42 ICB)

Action it

Craft

Show the children how to make their own well, to remind them of the story of the Samaritan woman. You may wish to share the video with them.

The title of the clip is linked to a different Bible story, but the activity can still be used for the story of the Samaritan woman.

Video

Rebekah at the well – Isaac and Rebecca – Sunday School Crafts – Bible Crafts by Kelly Hahn (1:17)

Afterwards you may want to encourage the children to write the memory verse for this month on the back of their well.

Pray it

Say:

There are lots of people in our society who are treated differently because of the colour of their

skin or their background. Our memory verse for this month reminds us that we are all one in Christ. Let's share it together.

Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

Encourage the children to think about the way they treat other people. How can they follow Jesus' example, treating everyone, regardless of their race or background, with love and respect?

After the discussion give the children time to write a prayer asking God for guidance and praying for those who are treated badly because of their race or religion. Is there anyone they could invite to an Explore it session or church activity? They could include this person in their prayers. If the children feel comfortable, then they can share their prayers with the rest of the group. Sing the 'Neither Jew nor Greek' song to bring the session to a close.

Video

'Neither Jew nor Greek' Galatians 3:28 by I Believe (1:05)

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.



Jesus is friends with everyone

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Verse:

John 4:5-11, 13-15, 25-26, 39-42
Jesus and a Samaritan woman



Aim:

To see how Jesus accepts a Samaritan woman



Notice

Sometimes we can get caught up in our own world, thinking about how we feel, what we want and what we need. It can be easy to miss the experiences of others and notice what they are going through.

As you go to school, or take part in clubs or activities this week, take a moment to notice those who may be treated differently or excluded from the rest of the group. In those moments, ask God to guide you to show his love to those who are excluded.



Discuss

Watch the clip together and discuss what it teaches us about respecting and sharing with others.

Life lessons sharing and respecting others
by 3AM Thoughts



Song for the week

'Everyone, everywhere' - Early Years -
February (2022) by IES Kids Church



Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 ESV)

LIVING
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Racial inclusion in the Kingdom of God



Verse:

Matthew 6:5-13

Jesus teaches about prayer



Aim:

To know that inclusion is part of God's Kingdom



Jesus gave his followers a special prayer that they could use. It is known as the Lord's Prayer.

One of the lines says, 'Your kingdom come', and in today's session we're going to explore what that means. We'll spend time praying for those who feel excluded and asking God to show us a glimpse of his Kingdom here on earth.

Each child will need:

- Poster paint and trays to make handprints
- Pens/pencils and paper
- *Explore it ideas* handout

You will need:

- Large strips of paper, each with one line of the Lord's Prayer on it – see Start it
- To find source material on a recent news event, eg children's newspaper or a **BBC Newsround bulletin** – see Tell it
- A really large piece of paper with the word 'CHURCH' sketched on it, to make a banner – see Action it



Start it

Place the large strips of paper around the room and see if the children can collect them and put them in the correct order. Read through the Lord's prayer together to start the *Explore it* session.

'Our Father in heaven,
we pray that your name will always be kept holy.
We pray that your kingdom will come.

We pray that what you want will be done,
here on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us the food we need for each day.
Forgive the sins we have done,
just as we have forgiven those who did wrong to us.
And do not cause us to be tested;
but save us from the Evil One.'

(Matthew 6:9-13 *ICB*)



Sing it

Say:

Today we will be discovering more about the special prayer Jesus gave to his followers. Let's sing 'The Lord's Prayer' together.

Song

'The Lord's Prayer' by Saddleback Kids (3:03)

Tell it

Say:

Jesus gave his followers a special prayer that showed them how they could talk to God.

Video

Jesus prayed - Bible Story by Life Kids (1:28)

Ask:

In the clip there were lots of examples of times when Jesus prayed. What kinds of situations and people did Jesus pray for?

Say:

We have already read the special prayer that Jesus taught his followers. We are going to spend some time focusing on one line: 'We pray that your kingdom will come.'

Ask:

- What do you think God's Kingdom is like?
- How is it different from the world we live in now?

Say:

Sometimes when we watch the news, or see people treating each other unkindly, it can feel like

we can't see any of God's Kingdom here on earth. Maybe we need to look a little closer. Maybe we need to realise that we can play an important part in showing people what God's Kingdom is like.

Say:

We know that inclusion, welcome and acceptance are signs of God's Kingdom on earth because the book of Revelation tells us that there will be no pain and every tear will be wiped away. We can show God's Kingdom to those who feel excluded.

The news

Share a recent news story with your group, perhaps about tragic situations or people trying to cause divisions between races and religions. As you watch or read the source material, model and discuss with children what prayer points are raised. Encourage the children to think of prayer and action points in response to the parts of our world that do not reflect God's Kingdom. Rather than feeling helpless, how can the children pray 'Your Kingdom come'?

Encourage the children to think about how they can show God's Kingdom here on earth. Ask the children to think of actions that they could take to make this situation better. They may not be able to directly help the situation, but they can reflect the attitude of Jesus in their everyday relationships, which is where the Kingdom of God *can* come.

Example

Prayer point: praying for families that are stuck in the middle of war and conflict.

Action point: be careful with the words that we say to each other and try to bring peace to the situations we face at school and at home.



Action it

Ask:

What is the Church?

Video

The Church is the People – A Sunday School lesson for kids by Douglas Talks (3:13)

Ask:

What did Douglas teach us about God's house?

Say:

Remember that God – Douglas called him 'the Holy Spirit' – comes to live inside us, so we become God's home. We don't do this alone, and once God is inside us, we want to be a friend and include others.

Banner

After discussing the clip and thinking about God's Church, create a large handprint banner spelling out the word 'CHURCH'. Make each letter from the children's handprints. You may like to add the words 'Your Kingdom come' to the banner and display it in the worship hall. The children could share what they have learned in these *Explore it* sessions with the rest of the church, showing their banner and singing their memory verse song.



Pray it

Say:

Let's share our memory verse together before we spend some time in prayer.

Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

Say:

In God's Kingdom everyone, no matter their colour, religion or background, is one in Christ Jesus. Here on earth we don't always see God's vision for his Kingdom. People treat each other in ways that do not represent the love that Jesus showed to others.

Ask the children to look at the banner they have created. Encourage them to imagine if the banner was made with handprints from all the people Jesus loves across the world. Whose handprint would be included/excluded?

As the children reflect on the endless love of God for all his people, sing the memory song together and then bring the session to a close in prayer.

Your group may wish to remember that 26-28 January is The Salvation Army's Prayer Gathering Weekend. Pray that this part of the Church becomes more racially inclusive and accepting of all people in 2024.



Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore it ideas* for children and families.

Explore it is produced by the Children and Youth Department in collaboration with Kay Moorby (soulwithaview)



Racial inclusion in the Kingdom of God

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Verse:
Matthew 6:5-13
Jesus teaches about prayer



Aim:
To know that inclusion is part of God's Kingdom



Discover

Watch this clip where Douglas will help you to discover more about the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer - Explaining the Lord's Prayer for Kids by Douglas Talks



Create

Gather the people at home together and create your own handprint picture.



Song for the week

'The Lord's Prayer' by Saddleback Kids
(3:03)



Memory verse

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'

(Galatians 3:28 *ESV*)

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